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1248	"	E 4564	Vyāsa śikṣā with commentary	Vyāsa	Avadhāni Vyāsaśikṣā P

# STORIES FROM XENOPHON

RETOLD BY

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## PREFACE

THE materials for the present volume, as the title implies, are drawn chiefly from the works of Xenophon, and more especially from the *Hellenics*, the *Anabasis*, and the *Memorabilia*. But wherever my author seemed to require illustrating or supplementing I have not scrupled to make free use of other sources. Thus in the purely historical part I have given in considerable detail the events described in the eighth book of Thucydides, which forms an integral part of the work of Xenophon. In this way I was enabled to complete a task which was left unfinished in two earlier volumes,<sup>1</sup> and carry the narrative of Greek history down to the second restoration of the democracy. And in the chapters on Socrates I have tried to fill up the details of the picture sketched by Xenophon, by adding a good deal of biographical matter which is found scattered up and down in the *Dialogues* of Plato. The bulk of the volume, however, was of course supplied by

<sup>1</sup> *Stories from Herodotus* and *Stories from Thucydides*.

Xenophon; and I should be well pleased if I could think that I had excited an interest among young readers in a brilliant and delightful writer, who deserves a better fate than to be thrust aside and forgotten, after a few months of reluctant familiarity with "that blessed word" *parasang*, and paradigms of irregular verbs.

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# STORIES FROM XENOPHON

## CHAPTER I

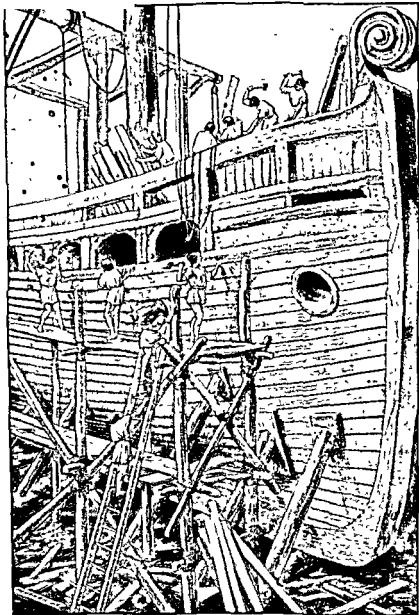
### THE ATHENIANS AT BAY

WE have seen<sup>1</sup> how the great expedition against Sicily ended in utter defeat and disaster, and the destruction of two great armaments. For some time the Athenians refused to listen to the rumours which were brought to their ears by the few survivors who came sadly home to Athens in the autumn of that calamitous year. But when no room was left for doubt they turned fiercely on the orators who had fired their ambition, and on the prophets and soothsayers who had assured them of the divine favour. It was indeed a rude awakening from those grand dreams of conquest which had led them to stake their all on a desperate hazard. Their treasury was empty; hardly a ship was left in the dockyards of Peiræus; all their skilled seamen, and the flower of their infantry, had perished on the fatal shores of Sicily. Already

<sup>1</sup> *Stories from Thucydides.*

in the previous summer, before the departure of the second fleet for Syracuse, the Spartans had established a fortified post at Decelea, in the heart of Attica, which kept Athens in a state of siege. In the face of this imminent peril the Athenians had stripped themselves of their last means of defence, and now it seemed as if the tyrant city must fall, helpless and unarmed, into the hands of her enemies.

But when the first impulse of rage and despair was past the Athenians showed that they had not altogether lost those high heroic virtues which, two generations before, had hurled back a flood of barbarism, and saved the liberties of Europe. The voice of private sorrow and the dark whisper of faction were silenced by the call of Athens in her need, and it was resolved by a unanimous vote to hold out to the last. Compelled now to fight for their very existence, the citizens were willing to make any sacrifice, and in this mood of self denial they determined to reduce to the narrowest limit those costly shows and festivals which were the chief joy and solace of their lives. At the same time they held themselves ready to forestall any movement of revolt among their allies, on whom they depended for the principal part of their revenues. By great exertions, means were provided for building a new fleet, and before long the timber vessels were discharging their



"The dockyards were ringing with the blows of the  
shipwright's hammer"

Patten Wilson

freight on the quays of Peiræus, and all the dockyards were ringing with the blows of the shipwright's hammer.

Happily for the Athenians, winter was now at hand, bringing some months' respite from hostilities, and enabling them to gather new heart and hope for the heavy task which lay before them. Even with this advantage, there seemed to be little prospect that they could make head against the multitude of foes who were preparing to close in upon them at the first approach of spring; and the belief was general throughout Greece that the coming year would see the end of the struggle. The haughty Queen of the Ægæan, who had sinned against the most deeply rooted instinct of Greek political life—the instinct of isolation—was at last brought low, and, among all those whom she had served and saved in the great conflict with the barbarian, not one was found to speak a word in her defence. All Greece was leagued against her, united by motives of ambition, hatred or interest. The Spartans, mindful of their old renown as the acknowledged leaders of Greeks, were ready to put out all their strength, and deal the last blow to their detested rivals; and their allies of the Peloponnesian league rallied to the call with cheerful alacrity, in the full assurance that their long toils and perils would soon be ended. Those who had hitherto stood aloof were now eager to rush

in, and enjoy a cheap triumph over the common enemy. The Syracusans, flushed with victory, had promised to send a squadron to act under Sparta, and help in dealing out to Athens the fate which they themselves had narrowly escaped. In the cities subject to Athens the fallacious cry of "Liberty!" was raised, in loud and confident tones. Even to far-distant Sousa the news had been brought, announcing the approaching downfall of the patriot city, whose dreaded name had for nearly seventy years kept the barbarian galleys out of Greek waters: and the Great King was beginning to renew his exactions in the coast towns of Asia Minor, where since the days of Xerxes no Persian tax-gatherer had dared to show his face.

During the winter envoys arrived at Sparta from the wealthy and powerful island of Chios, the only member<sup>1</sup> of the original confederacy of Delos which had been allowed to retain its independence. Holding this unique position, as the favoured ally of Athens, with no obligation beyond that of supplying a certain number of ships to assist in keeping the peace of the Ægæan, Chios had enjoyed a long period of unbroken prosperity, and the general body of the citizens was averse to any change. The application came from the nobles of Chios, whose selfish ambition had been held in

<sup>1</sup> Since the revolt and conquest of Lesbos in 427 B.C.

check by the strong hand of the Athenian democracy, and who were now looking forward to a career of licensed excess, under the protection of Sparta. Their request was backed by Tissaphernes, the satrap of Ionia, who had recently received a peremptory mandate from Darius, the Persian king, ordering him to collect the long arrears of tribute from the Greek cities in his province. A second invitation was received about the same time from Pharnabazus, another Persian satrap, who ruled over the northern coast districts of Asia Minor, where there were numerous Greek cities, included in the Athenian empire. Meanwhile Agis, the Spartan king, stationed with a strong force at Decelea, was considering two appeals for aid which had reached him from Lesbos, and from the great island of Eubœa, which for thirty-three years had been an Athenian estate.

These conflicting claims led to a lively debate, and it was finally decided to give the preference to Chios. This decision was due to the advice of Alcibiades, who thus appears for the third time as the evil genius of Athens. Since his condemnation and banishment three years before, Alcibiades had been living as an exile at Sparta, and guided by his insidious counsel the Spartans had been able to aim two deadly blows against Athens, by sending Gylippus to conduct the siege of Syracuse, and

by the fortification of Decelea. The arch traitor knew only too well the vulnerable points of his native city, and he now used all his influence to urge the plea of Chios, arguing that the revolt of this favoured community, if strongly supported by Sparta, would be immediately followed by a general secession of the Athenian allies. His arguments had great weight with the Spartans, and they resolved to open the campaign at Chios, from which place, if successful, they could extend their operations to Lesbos and the Hellespont.

Much time had been lost in these negotiations and it was late in the spring<sup>1</sup> before the Peloponnesian fleet, numbering twenty one vessels, set sail from the harbour of Corinth, on their voyage to Chios. During the interval the suspicions of the Athenians had been aroused, and before the Peloponnesians could reach the open sea they found themselves intercepted by an Athenian squadron of superior number, and were obliged to run for safety to Peiræum, a deserted inlet on the northern coast of the Argolic peninsula. Here they were held in close blockade by the Athenians.

The news of this reverse at once chilled the ardour of the Spartans, whose dull phlegmatic temper was slow to take fire, and quick to cool.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> May 412 B.C.

<sup>2</sup> See the famous contrast between the Athenian and Spartan character in *Thuc.* 1. 68.

The slight mishap seemed to them an omen of ill-success to their whole enterprise, and they were on the point of issuing an order to keep back a small detachment of five ships, which was just starting from the harbour of Laconia, under the command of Chalcideus, who was to be accompanied by Alcibiades. But that implacable schemer, active only in mischief, once more prevented the Spartans from playing the game of Athens. Endius, one of the Ephors, the chief magistrates at Sparta, was his personal friend; to him Alcibiades applied, strongly representing the extreme importance of striking without delay at the keystone of the Athenian empire, before the Athenians had time to make their preparations. "Place me only at Chios," he said, "with these five ships, and I will draw such a picture of the weakness of Athens, and the zeal of Sparta, that not only Chios, but all the cities of Ionia, will raise the standard of revolt." Such was the energy of Alcibiades, that not only Endius—but the whole board of Ephors were won over to his views; and being now armed with the official sanction of Sparta he hastened down to the harbour with Chalcideus, made a rapid dash across the sea, and landed on the coast of Asia, at a place which lies within easy reach of the harbour of Chios. Here they held a conference with the leaders of the disaffected party, and by their advice they sailed straight for the chief town of Chios, which is situ-

ated on the eastern side of the island, facing the mainland. By the contrivance of the conspirators the council was just assembled for a sitting when the little squadron sailed into the harbour. The leaders of the popular party were taken by surprise, and had no time to organise an opposition; and when Alcibiades and Chalcideus were introduced to the council they had little difficulty in carrying a resolution of revolt from Athens. The example of Chios was promptly followed by Erythræ and Clazomenæ, two Ionian cities on the neighbouring mainland; and the predictions of Alcibiades were so far fulfilled.

The news of the revolt of Chios roused the Athenians to extraordinary exertions. At the beginning of the war a sum of one thousand talents had been set apart, only to be used in the event of an attack on Athens from the sea, and the penalty of death was pronounced against anyone who should propose to employ this reserve fund for any other purpose. But the present emergency was so serious that the Athenians had no other resource than to revoke the restraining clause, and employ the thousand talents to provide a fleet for the reduction of Chios. Eight ships were immediately detached from the fleet engaged in the blockade of the Peloponnesians at Peiræum, and sent to the seat of war, under the command of Strombichides. But though speedily reinforced by twelve more ships

from Athens, Strombichides was unable to prevent the revolt of Miletus, which was effected shortly afterwards by the contrivance of Alcibiades, who stood in friendly relations with the chief men of the Ionian metropolis.

On this occasion was concluded the first of a long series of treaties between Sparta and Persia. The stipulations of this document, at once scandalous and absurd, were as follows:—"Let all the lands that ever belonged to the King of Persia and his fathers, be the King's; and let the King, with the Spartans and their allies, make war on the Athenians, and prevent them from deriving any tribute from these lands." According to the wording of this agreement, all the islands and coast districts of the Ægæan, and all the mainland of Greece, as far as the Isthmus of Corinth, were declared to be Persian territory; and moreover no condition was inserted binding the king to provide pay for the Spartan fleet, which, however disgraceful in itself, was the sole reason for concluding a treaty at all. As a seal to this infamous compact, Miletus was handed over to Tissaphernes.

By successive reinforcements the Athenian fleet had been raised to the number of forty-six; and a fortunate event, which occurred in the summer of this year, secured to them a strong centre for their

operations, and a safe retreat in a friendly harbour. Men still in the prime of life could remember the formidable revolt of Samos, nine years before the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War, and the desperate struggle which ended in the total subjugation of the warlike islanders. Since that time Samos had been a subject and tributary of Athens; but the Athenians had not interfered with the Samian government, which was in the hands of a wealthy landed aristocracy. It may be conjectured that the nobles of Samos, like those of Chios, were intending to revolt from Athens; but the movement was forestalled by the prompt action of the commons, who rose suddenly against their high-born rulers, slew two hundred of them, banished four hundred, and divided their lands among themselves. The importance of this revolution was at once recognised at Athens, and a decree was passed, granting full political independence to Samos, which henceforth became the headquarters of the Athenian fleet.

Having thrown in their lot with Sparta, and exposed themselves to the vengeance of Athens, the Chians were eager to involve as many other cities as possible in their own guilt; and with this purpose they sailed to Lesbos, and raised a revolt at Methymna and Mytilene. Just before this the Peloponnesians had broken the blockade at Peiræum, and Astyochus had arrived at Chios with

a first instalment of four ships to take the supreme command in the eastern waters of the Ægæan. Astyochus first turned his attention to Lesbos wishing to second the efforts of the Chians in withdrawing that important island from the Athenian alliance. But the whole attempt was frustrated by the energy of the Athenian commanders, who struck swiftly at Mytilene, the capital of Lesbos, took nine of the Chian triremes, and, working from this centre soon brought back the whole island to its allegiance. This great success was quickly followed by the recovery of Clazomenæ.

The hand of Athens now fell heavy on the fair island of Chios, which after fifty years of unbroken prosperity had been brought to ruin by the narrow and selfish policy of a faction. Confined to their walls, and closely invested by sea and land, the Chians were compelled to look idly on, while their fields were laid waste, and their vineyards and olive-trees destroyed. When they had once gained a footing on the island, the Athenians never relaxed their grip, and towards the end of the year they established a fortified camp at Delphinium, at a short distance from the chief town, thus inflicting upon Chios the miseries of Attica.

On all sides the prospects of the Athenians seemed to be brightening. Shortly after the first defeat of the Chians their position was greatly strengthened by the arrival of forty-eight fresh ships, with three

generals<sup>1</sup> in command, one of whom, Phrynichus, was destined to play a leading part in the events of this troubled period. Landing with a powerful force near Miletus, they gave battle to the combined troops of the Milesians, Peloponnesians and Tissaphernes, and having gained a decisive victory prepared to form the blockade of Miletus. But now the balance was turned again in favour of the Peloponnesians, by the sudden appearance of fifty-five ships, including twenty from Syracuse, under the renowned Hermocrates. As soon as these welcome tidings reached Miletus, the ever-active Alcibiades, who had been present at the battle, flung himself on horseback, galloped down to the coast, and sought an interview with the commanders of the fleet. "If you wish," he said, "to avert a disaster, you must come instantly to the relief of Miletus; for if Miletus is lost, the Athenians will recover their supremacy in Ionia, and all our work will be undone."

Moved by the urgent appeal of Alcibiades, the Spartan officer who was in charge of the fleet made haste to join his friends at Miletus. The Athenian generals now prepared to give battle to the whole armament of the Peloponnesians, which was superior to their own both in numbers and equipment; but so rash an encounter, which might have ended

<sup>1</sup> The Athenian Strategos (General) held command both in the army and at the fleet.

fatally for Athens, was happily averted by the prudence of Phrynichus. Times were greatly changed since the day when Phormio with twenty Athenian triremes engaged and defeated nearly four times that number in the Corinthian Gulf. The maritime power of Athens had been shattered to pieces in the fatal bay of Syracuse, and the ships which now had to fight her battles were hastily built, and manned by raw crews, without experience in naval warfare. What would have been infamy in the days of her pride was now a matter of common prudence and self-preservation. All this was well understood by Phrynichus, and fortunately his influence with his colleagues induced them to decline an engagement, and return to their station at Samos.

Thus relieved from pressure at Miletus, the Peloponnesians were now able to render an important service to Tissaphernes, by storming the Carian town of Iasus, which was in revolt against the king. In return for this benefit, Tissaphernes felt himself compelled to give some substantial proof of good will to his allies, whom he had hitherto held by promises alone. Accordingly he distributed a month's pay among the crews, at the high rate of one drachma<sup>1</sup> a day per man, intimating, however, that the same scale of payment could not be continued. This statement caused some

<sup>1</sup> About ninepence halfpenny.

uneasiness among the Peloponnesian leaders but for the present no open breach occurred. We shall learn shortly that, a new and sinister influence was beginning to work on the mind of the wily satrap which led to important results in the future.

Thirty five additional ships, which reached Samos late in the autumn, raised the numbers of the Athenian fleet to the grand total of one hundred and four, and enabled them to complete the blockade of Chios, and assume the aggressive against Miletus. But before long their action was paralysed by the dissensions which had broken out in their own camp, and which were due, as we shall see, to the same master of intrigue who had sown discord between Tissaphernes and the Peloponnesians. Among the latter, affairs were brought to a crisis by the arrival of Lichas who had been sent out from Sparta to inquire into the conduct of Astyochus and see if some better terms could be made with the Persian satrap. A second treaty had just been concluded between Astyochus and Tissaphernes, the terms of which, though including some mention of pay to the fleet, were little less disgraceful to the honour of Sparta than those of the first. The second treaty still acknowledged by implication, the sovereignty of the Great King over all the cities of Greece, from the coast-line of Asia Minor to the Isthmus of Corinth, and Lichas indignantly declared that Sparta would

not touch the gold of Persia on such conditions. On hearing this bold protest Tissaphernes broke off the negotiations, and went away in a rage.

Deserted by their barbarian patron, the Peloponnesians turned their attention to Rhodes, a wealthy Dorian island, which had hitherto been a faithful ally of Athens, but was now showing a disposition to revolt. The invitation, as usual, came from a faction of the nobles, and Astyochus succeeded, by a sudden descent, in making himself master of the whole island. The whole Peloponnesian fleet, numbering ninety-four ships, took up its station at Rhodes for the rest of the winter, and lay there inactive for the greater part of three months.<sup>1</sup>

On reviewing the events of the year just ended, the twentieth of the war, we have ample reason to wonder at the quick rally of the Athenians from the effects of their overthrow in Sicily. Once more they had frustrated the confident hopes of all Greece, and not only held their own, but gained a decided advantage. The revolt of Lesbos had been stamped out; Clazomenæ had been recovered; they had exacted ample vengeance for the treason of Chios, and defeated the Peloponnesians in a pitched battle at Miletus; and in the course of these operations a new army and fleet had sprung up, as if by magic. Most important of all, the happy circumstance of the revolution

<sup>1</sup> Middle of January to the end of March 411 B.C.

at Samos had secured them a staunch and able ally, and a strong strategic centre. Working together in harmony, they might still hope to bring the conflict to a victorious issue. But treason was lurking in the very heart of the state, and the history of the following year will show that Athens had more to fear from a small and privileged section of her own citizens than from the arms of Sparta or the gold of Persia.

## CHAPTER II

### THE CONSPIRACY OF THE FOUR HUNDRED

IF we wish to unravel the tangled skein of events in this dark and gloomy period we must follow with close attention the career of Alcibiades. For three years he had been playing the game of Sparta with consummate ability, and had wrought deadly mischief against the city which had cast him out. But treason brings its own penalty, and he who fights on the side of his country's enemies must expect neither trust nor gratitude from those whom he serves. For various reasons the Spartans began to look coldly on Alcibiades, as month followed month, and his sanguine promises of an easy triumph over Athens were not fulfilled. Endius, his personal friend, resigned his office as Ephor in the autumn; and the new Ephors were unfriendly to Alcibiades. Moreover, he had incurred the bitter enmity of King Agis, whose wife he had betrayed. The defeat of the Peloponnesians at Miletus gave his enemies the pretext which they required, and an order was sent out to Astyochus to put him to death. Warned of his danger, he fled to the court

of Tissaphernes at Magnesia, and before long we find him installed as the confidential adviser of the Persian satrap. This position was thoroughly congenial to the desperate adventurer, as it gave him the opportunity of gratifying his spite against Sparta, and opened a new field for his unrivalled talents as a diplomatist. With easy effrontery he assumed the part of a disinterested friend of Persia, and warned Tissaphernes that it was not to the interest of the king to allow both military and maritime power to be concentrated in the hands of the Spartans. "Your true policy," he said, "is to allow the Athenians and Spartans to wear each other out; then you can step in, and dictate what terms you please to them both. You must cut down the pay of the Peloponnesian crews, and amuse the commanders by promising to bring up the Phœnician fleet. If they grow restive, a few bribes distributed among the chief officers will keep them quiet."

This advice was thoroughly in accord with the character of Tissaphernes, and he forthwith announced his intention of reducing the rate of pay. From this time his relations with Sparta became more and more strained, ending, towards the end of the year, in an open rupture, and the withdrawal of the Peloponnesian fleet to Rhodes. But even after this Tissaphernes still kept up communication with *Astyochns* and his lieutenants,

who were induced by golden arguments to abstain from any movement against the enemy

So far the Persian viceroy and his Athenian adviser were thoroughly in agreement. But Tissaphernes must have been struck with amazement, when Alcibiades ventured to go a step further, and hazarded the audacious statement that Athens, and not Sparta, was the natural ally of Persia. The Spartans, he argued, were pledged to procure liberty for all Greeks, both those on the islands, and those on the mainland of Asia, whereas the Athenians pursued a policy of conquest and subjection, and were so far in sympathy with Persia. Athens, again, aimed only at a maritime empire, and would be content to leave the Asiatic Greeks to the disposal of the king. Why, then, should not Athens and Persia share the spoils of Greece, as friendly imperial powers, respecting and supporting each other?

Such was the new scheme of policy which now sprang suddenly from the fertile brain of Alcibiades, and was unfolded gradually, veiled in dark hints and hedged by cautious reserve, to the incredulous mind of Tissaphernes. It was, of course, a mere temporary expedient, for none knew better than its author that so wild a dream could never be fulfilled, and that Tissaphernes was not the man to be duped so easily. But near at hand, in the Athenian camp at Samos, was another audience, to whom he knew

that his words would be reported, and whose credulity he had good reason to believe to be almost without limit. He had deceived them before, when they had been carried away by his specious eloquence on the eve of the Sicilian expedition. And now, if he could only make them believe that he held the key to the boundless wealth of Persia, he might yet hope to return in honour to Athens, in the character of mediator between his countrymen and the Great King. At anyrate this pretence would serve as a means of opening communications with the Athenian leaders at Samos and thus prepare the way for his recall from exile. That end once attained, he must rely on his own skill to keep up the delusion until it was no longer needed.

‘Since the expulsion of Hippias,<sup>1</sup> and the establishment of the Athenian democracy by Cleisthenes, there had always been a faction of wealthy and high-born citizens at Athens who resented the curtailment of their privileges, and looked with a jealous eye on the concentration of power in the hands of the commons. In the great days of the imperial democracy, when Athens was raised to the height of power by the united efforts of all classes, these malcontents were cowed into silence. But they still chafed in secret, and in times of stress and trial they were a constant source of danger to

<sup>1</sup> B.C. 510.

the state The enlightened institutions of popular government, which laid the chief burdens of the state expenses on the rich, but made high and low equal in the eyes of the law, were in their eyes a heavy grievance, and they sighed for the good old times, when wealth and high birth were a passport to unbridled licence Some of the leaders of this party were present among the captains and other men of influence in the camp at Samos To men of this stamp, nourished on disloyalty, the weakness of Athens was their best opportunity, and they were already ripe for treason, when they received a message from Alcibiades which determined them to strike at once Alcibiades promised, if they would procure his restoration from exile, to obtain the alliance of Tissaphernes and thus provide them with the means of carrying on the war, but the offer was made conditional on the overthrow of "that vile Democracy, which had made him a homeless outlaw

On receipt of this message, some of the chief officers crossed over to the mainland, and held an interview with Alcibiades, who renewed his promises of help from Persia, protesting, however, that the king could make no terms with a democracy How far he succeeded in imposing on his hearers, who were men of his own class, and well acquainted with his character, it is impossible to say But, whether they believed him or not, his proposal,

with the condition attached to it, gave them a powerful instrument for working on the feelings of the Athenian crews, among whom there was a general conviction that Alcibiades held the balance between Athens and her enemies, and could turn the scale which way he chose. So they returned to Samos, fully resolved to bring matters to a crisis; and after enlisting on their side all whom they could trust, they made known the grand offer of Alcibiades to the general body of the Athenians serving in the fleet: "Give up your Democracy, and the King of Persia will be your paymaster till the end of the war." • It was a hard choice which was set before the sturdy mariners of Peiræus, who formed the backbone of the Democracy; but the need of money was so urgent that for the present all murmurs were silenced.

The first protest came from Phrynichus, one of the generals, whose prudence had already averted a premature collision with the Peloponnesian fleet at Miletus. He was a man of humble origin, who had worked his way by sheer ability to the highest office in the state, and was conversant with every aspect of political life at Athens. Such a man was not likely to be deceived by the shallow sophistries of Alcibiades, and he now stood forward boldly to unmask the designs of that shameless adventurer. Alcibiades, he declared, did not care a straw for the interests of the many or the few; *his only object*

was to embroil the affairs of Athens, and find an opportunity, through the conflict of parties, of procuring his own recall from exile. As to the offer of help from Persia, it was an impudent fiction. Could any sane person suppose that the Great King would suddenly throw over the Peloponnesians, whose cause he had made his own, and seek an alliance with the Athenians, his hereditary enemies? Still less was it to be believed that the proposed change of government would strengthen the allegiance of the cities subject to Athens. It was to the free law courts of Athens, open to every city in the Athenian empire, and inaccessible to bribery or intimidation, that the subject communities looked for aid and redress against the tyranny of their nobles; and if that one safeguard were destroyed the only tie which bound them to their suzerain would be broken.

The arguments of Phrynichus were unanswerable, but his words fell on deaf ears, and the conspirators at Samos at once took steps to carry out the revolution. A commission was despatched to Athens, led by Pisander, one of the most violent of the oligarchs, to lay before the assembly the proposals of Alcibiades. These proposals, which included the recall of Alcibiades, meant ruin to Phrynichus, and he determined at all costs to checkmate the plans of so formidable an adversary. Then began a duel of plot and counterplot, which

throws a melancholy light on the political morality of that period. Knowing that his only chance was to destroy his opponent, Phrynichus sent a letter to Astyochus, the Spartan admiral, who was then at Miletus,<sup>1</sup> giving a full account of the intrigues of Alcibiades, and the projected alliance between Athens and Persia. But Phrynichus, who was now turning traitor to save himself, was met by a treason as great as his own. For Astyochus had sold himself to Tissaphernes, and instead of using the information in the interests of Sparta he went up to Magnesia, and laid the letter before the Persian satrap. The consequence was that Alcibiades, who was still high in favour at Magnesia, was furnished with a terrible weapon against his enemy Phrynichus, and he forthwith communicated the contents of the letter to the generals at Samos, and called upon them to put the traitor to death.

But Phrynichus was a man of infinite resource, and as soon as he became aware of the imminent peril in which he had placed himself he was ready with a new device, contrived to re-establish his credit in the Athenian camp. Before his enemies had time to move against him, he wrote a second letter to Astyochus, in which he assumed a tone of injured friendship, and gently reproached the Spartan admiral for betraying his confidence. "I

<sup>1</sup> These events occurred in the winter of 412 B.C., before the removal of the Peloponnesian fleet to Rhodes.

am resolved, however," added the accomplished dissimbler, "to return good for evil, and if you will appear in force before our station in Samos, I will so arrange matters that the whole Athenian fleet shall fall into your hands. It is a sad necessity which compels me to turn against my country, but you, who have driven me to this pass, should be the last to call me traitor."

Phrynichus acted on the supposition that his correspondent would again turn informer, and immediately after despatching the letter he went to his colleagues, and warned them that he had received information that the Peloponnesians were meditating an attack on Samos. Steps were at once taken to place the Athenian fleet in a state of defence, and Phrynichus himself took a leading part in these measures of precaution. Accordingly, when a second message was brought from Magnesia, disclosing all the details of the pretended plot, Phrynichus was cleared of both charges, which were supposed to have been invented by Alcibiades to ruin his opponent. For once, therefore, the great master of diplomatic fence was foiled with his own weapons.

Meanwhile Pisander and his companions had arrived at Athens, and laid the proposals of Alcibiades before the assembly. Loud was the outcry among the citizens when they were told that they must give up their cherished constitution, and

receive back into their midst an outlaw stained with a double treason, and black with the guilt of sacrilege. But all the clamour was met by Pisander with this simple question: "How," he asked, "are we to hold our own against the Peloponnesians, unless we can induce the Great King to abandon the alliance of Sparta, and throw his weight on the side of Athens?" No one being prepared with an answer, he proceeded to drive the argument home by declaring that Alcibiades was the only man who could work this miracle, and that he had refused to lend his aid unless some safeguard were provided against the licence of democratic government; nor would the king consent to open his purse except on the same condition. No one was there to instruct the poor deluded populace that the whole scheme of a Persian alliance was an impudent fiction, forged by a desperate exile to serve his own purposes; and Pisander succeeded at last in carrying a decree that he with ten others should be sent out to make what terms they could with Alcibiades. At the same time Phrynichus was deposed from his command, for alleged misconduct in the late campaign, and Leon and Diomedon were appointed to take his place.

Having taken steps to ensure the progress of the revolution at Athens, Pisander set out with his confederates for Asia, where they lost no time in seeking an interview with Alcibiades, who was

still living under the protection of Tissaphernes at Magnesia. We are not informed how far the satrap had lent his countenance to the intrigues of his dangerous guest; but it is certain that from the first he had no intention of taking up the cause of Athens, and he was already beginning to think that he had carried matters too far. When, therefore, Alcibiades was confronted by the Athenian envoys, and called upon to redeem his pledges, he found himself in an awkward dilemma. But he extricated himself with his usual dexterity, making such extravagant demands on behalf of Tissaphernes that the commissioners, though prepared to go great lengths, at last perceived that he was playing with them, and broke off the negotiations in disgust.

But though disappointed in their hopes of aid from Persia, the conspirators had gone too deep to be able to draw back with safety, and on the return of Pisander to Samos the whole party drew closer together, and resolved, in spite of Alcibiades, to proceed with the revolution. With them were associated some three hundred of those Samians who, in the previous year, had taken the lead in putting down the nobles and establishing a democratical form of government at Samos. Pisander, with five of the envoys, forthwith took ship for Athens, where matters were now rapidly approaching a crisis; and soon after their departure

an act of violence was committed by those Samians who had recently been converted to Oligarchy, which led to important results and showed that the final issue of the struggle lay in the hands of the Athenian fleet and army. There was a certain Hyperbolus belonging to that class of men known as Demagogues, of whom Cleon is the most notorious example. He had gained some distinction as a leader of the populace at Athens, but was now living in exile at Samos having been banished on account of his openly scandalous life. The Samians who had recently joined the conspiracy wished to give some proof of their zeal in the cause of Oligarchy, and in concert with some of their Athenian confederates they seized Hyperbokus who was selected as the representative of popular institutions and put him to death. They then prepared to make a general attack on the Commons of Samos, but these latter, perceiving their intentions made an earnest appeal to the known friends of Democracy in the Athenian fleet, to Leon and Diomedon the successors of Phrynichus to Thrasyllus captain of a trireme, and to Thrasybulus then a simple soldier, but in after days one of the most illustrious among the champions of freedom. To these the Samian Democrats now applied for protection entreating them not to allow the best friends of Athens to perish and Samos the last stronghold of the

Athenian empire, to fall under the tyranny of a bloodthirsty faction

Hitherto the machinations of Pisander and his friends had received no check, but the appeal of the threatened Democrats opened the eyes of the Athenian leaders to the gravity of the crisis, and they took their measures with promptitude and vigour. Addressing themselves to the soldiers and sailors serving in the fleet, they called upon them to stand by the cause of Democracy, and they met with a hearty response, especially from the crew of the *Paralus*, the Athenian state trireme, which was manned entirely by full Athenian citizens, distinguished by their uncompromising hatred of the Oligarchy. Full precautions were taken in view of the impending attack, and when the Oligarchs rose they found a determined resistance on all sides, and were repulsed with loss. Some thirty of them were killed, and the ring leaders were sent into exile, but the people used their victory with great moderation, and by their firmness and good sense order was soon restored.

As yet nothing was known at Samos of the state of affairs in Athens, and Chæreas, an Athenian, who had played a leading part in defending the cause of Democracy, was sent home on board the *Paralus* as bearer of the good news. But a most disagreeable surprise was prepared for the good men of the *Paralus* when they landed at Peiræus.

They found the Democracy overthrown, and an Oligarchy of Four Hundred set up in its place; and instead of the honourable reception which they were expecting, they were turned out of the *Paralus*, and sent to cruise off Eubœa in another trireme, while Chæreas, with two or three of the officers, was thrown into prison. Chæreas, however, contrived to escape, and, making his way back to Samos, he inflamed the feelings of the army by a highly-coloured description of the wild scenes which he had witnessed at Athens.

It is now time to retrace our steps, and follow the successive stages which ended in a short-lived triumph for the Athenian Oligarchs. When Pisander left Athens for Samos, after obtaining the decree which empowered him to treat with Alcibiades, the work of carrying on the revolution was taken up by a small band of able and unscrupulous men, led by Antiphon, who now suddenly appears as a conspicuous figure in the public life of Athens. Antiphon was a professional teacher of rhetoric, whose business it was to prepare ambitious young men for a political career, by training them in the art of speaking, which was essential to those who aspired to guide the stormy moods of a popular assembly. He also wrote speeches for litigants in the Athenian law courts, and in the practice of these two branches of his profession he had acquired great fame and wealth, and gained an intimate

knowledge of the intricate machinery of popular government. Such men, though largely employed, were looked upon with fear and suspicion, and excluded from all the great offices of state: and Antiphon had long fretted under the restrictions which crippled his great powers, by keeping him in a private station. His opportunity had come at last, and he threw all his vast experience and consummate talent for intrigue on the side of the conspirators. The strength of this party lay in the clubs, associations of the wealthy and high-born, which were primarily intended for purposes of pastime and social pleasure, but could easily be converted into a powerful engine of revolution. Pisander, while he was still at Athens, had already gone the round of these societies, and exhorted them to combine for a general attack on the Commons, and under the direction of Antiphon they were organised into a solid phalanx, ready to act in concert against the scattered forces of Democracy. He was ably seconded by Theramenes, afterwards famous in his character of trimmer, and by the bold and crafty Phrynichus, who, after losing his command at Samos, joined heart and soul in the revolutionary movement.

At Athens, as at Samos, the new coalition was cemented by bloodshed. The first to fall a victim was Androcles, a popular leader, who had been

against Alcibiades. For the delusive hope of Persian aid, to be obtained by the influence of Alcibiades, had still a strong hold on the minds of the conspirators, and they thought to win his favour by the murder of one of his bitterest enemies. One by one, the most prominent Democrats were removed in the same way, being struck down by a band of youthful assassins, who had been got together for the purpose.

Violence, however, was only a subsidiary part of the programme agreed upon between Antiphon and his confederates. They desired, above all, to obtain a legal sanction for their proceedings, by making it appear that the proposed change of government had been brought about by a free vote of the popular assembly. At every meeting of the Ecclesia, or Parliament of Athens, orators, carefully instructed in their part, enlarged on the costliness of popular government, on the necessity of abolishing all payment for the performance of public duties, except service in the army and fleet, and of confining the franchise to a select body of five thousand citizens, chosen from those whose property reached a certain fixed standard.

It must be remembered that every full Athenian citizen was in regular receipt of the public pay, for attendance in the Ecclesia, service on juries, and, after the age of thirty, for the performance of his duties in the Senate of Five Hundred, which

was filled up every year by lot from the whole body of the citizens above that age. The poorer Athenians derived a large part of their income from this source, and the proposed reform, if carried out, would reduce them to penury. It may well be believed that so large a measure of disfranchisement and confiscation was viewed with high disfavour; but such was the terror excited by the recent murders that few ventured to give voice to the general sentiment, and those who were bold enough to utter a protest were quietly and swiftly put out of the way. No attempt was made to bring the assassins to justice, for as the champions of popular rights fell one after the other every tongue was tied by fear, and the city of free speech lay under the spell of a paralysing panic.

With wicked joy Antiphon and his fellows saw the success of their first assault on the liberties of Athens, and prepared to follow up the blow. For the proposed scheme of a reformed constitution was a mere blind, intended to cover far more sweeping changes. The Five Thousand was a purely imaginary aggregate, which was put forward to serve a double purpose: first, to create an impression that the conspiracy was shared in by a large proportion of the citizens, and secondly, to provide a cloak for shameless usurpation. It was, indeed, a master-stroke of policy, and contributed more than anything else to spread distrust and alarm among the

friends of Democracy, and prevent them from raising any effective opposition. For, as no list of the Five Thousand was issued, it was impossible for any man to know that his own friend and neighbour, his own brother or son, was not a member of that mysterious body. All free interchange of feeling was at an end, and men went about with fear on their faces, keeping a strict guard over their lips lest their confidence should be betrayed.

While all the city was waiting in this state of awed suspense for the issue, Pisander and his five companions appeared on the scene, bringing with them a troop of three hundred Hoplites, whom they had enlisted during their voyage through the islands, to act under the orders of the revolutionary party. From this moment the conspirators marched with rapid strides to their goal. First, a vote was extorted from the cowed and dispirited people, appointing ten commissioners to draw up a new scheme of government, to be made known on a certain day. When the day arrived the assembly was convened, contrary to the usual custom, in the sacred precinct of Poseidon, at a place called Colonus, outside the city walls, and here, in what must have been a packed meeting, the commissioners brought forward a motion, abrogating the penalties provided by law against those who introduced any measure involving a change in the constitution.

Again the proposal was tamely allowed to pass, and then Pisander and his fellows proceeded to take the final step, by bringing in a Bill to abolish the existing form of Democracy, to make an end of all payment for the discharge of civic functions, and to place the government in the hands of Four Hundred, with power to summon the assembly of Five Thousand when and where they pleased. At last the truth had come out, and the fatal image of oligarchical tyranny was exhibited in all its deformity. But no one dared to utter a word of dissent, and the bill became law.

Thus by a dexterous combination of force and fraud the constitutional machinery of Athens was converted into an instrument for overthrowing the Democracy, and one of the best instincts of the Athenian people, their profound reverence for law and tradition, was abused to obtain sanction for lawless aggression. It only remained for the Four Hundred to assert the authority thus nefariously acquired. But this was a step attended with considerable danger; for since the occupation of Decelea the whole city had been turned into a garrison, and thousands of armed men were posted at various stations in the public squares and streets, awaiting the signal to relieve guard on the walls; and it might well be feared that these men would resist the attempt to carry into effect a vote extorted from a small minority. This difficulty had been

places on a very precarious tenure, for the vast majority of the citizens was bitterly opposed to them, they had just heard of the failure of their friends in Samos, and since Pisander's return from Asia the hope of a Persian alliance, which had served them as a lever to start the revolution was known to be an idle dream. Convinced that no thing short of treason could secure the permanence of their rule, they immediately began to make overtures to Agis, who was still commanding at Decelea offering to surrender the city into his hands. But Agis doubted their ability to carry out their offer, and thought that party strife was still raging within the walls. He therefore rejected the application from the Four Hundred and, having sent for reinforcements, marched with all speed against Athens, hoping to profit by the internal confusion and carry the city by assault. But here he was disappointed, for he found the battlements thronged with soldiers, and some few of his own men were cut off by a vigorous sally of the Athenian horse men. After this Agis was more disposed to listen to the proposals of the traitors, and he invited them to send envoys to Sparta, to discuss terms of capitulation.

In response to the invitation of Agis the Four Hundred sent an embassy to Sparta, and at the same time a deputation was despatched with a conciliatory message to Samos. But when the

foreseen by the conspirators, and they had taken their precautions accordingly. Waiting for the sultry hour of noon, when most of the soldiers had left their posts for rest and refreshment, the Four Hundred, escorted by their hired band of assassins, and by the three hundred Hoplites from the islands, left Colonus and marched into the city, each carrying a dagger concealed about his person. Those of their partisans who were enrolled for garrison duty had previously received orders to remain at their stations, ready to meet any attempt at armed interference on the part of the citizens. Passing through the deserted streets, where only the friendly sentinels were standing on the alert, they entered the Senate House, where the senators were holding a meeting, and bade them take their pay and begone. The alarmed officials, who were taken by surprise, had no choice but to submit. They rose from their seats, and filed out in silence, each receiving his pay as he passed through the doors; and the melancholy fact is recorded that not one of them was man enough to refuse the wages of shame.

Once installed in the Senate House, the Four Hundred organised themselves into a practical executive body, and inaugurated the beginning of their office with solemn sacrifice and prayer. Their short period of power was marked by extreme rigour; but they well knew that they held their

places on a very precarious tenure, for the vast majority of the citizens was bitterly opposed to them, they had just heard of the failure of their friends in Samos, and since Pisander's return from Asia the hope of a Persian alliance, which had served them as a lever to start the revolution, was known to be an idle dream. Convinced that nothing short of treason could secure the permanence of their rule, they immediately began to make overtures to Agis, who was still commanding at Decelea, offering to surrender the city into his hands. But Agis doubted their ability to carry out their offer, and thought that party strife was still raging within the walls. He therefore rejected the application from the Four Hundred and, having sent for reinforcements, marched with all speed against Athens, hoping to profit by the internal confusion and carry the city by assault. But here he was disappointed, for he found the battlements thronged with soldiers and some few of his own men were cut off by a vigorous sally of the Athenian horsemen. After this Agis was more disposed to listen to the proposals of the traitors, and he invited them to send envoys to Sparta, to discuss terms of capitulation.

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deputies put in at Delos, tidings came to their ears which determined them to remain there, and watch the course of events. It is necessary, therefore, to resume the thread of that part of our narrative from the point when Chæreas escaped from Athens, and came back to the camp at Samos, with his tale of rapine and bloodshed. His report raised such a storm of indignation among the Athenian crews that they were, with difficulty restrained from beginning a general massacre of the known partisans of Oligarchy. Happily such a calamity was averted by the exertions of the more sober-minded, who foresaw the ruinous consequences of such an outbreak; but, in order to provide a vent for the excited feelings of the Democrats, a grand meeting was summoned, at which all those of military age, both Samians and Athenians, were present. Then occurred one of the most remarkable scenes in Greek history. Directed by Thrasyllus and Thrasybulus, their acknowledged leaders, these citizen soldiers and sailors took a solemn oath, binding themselves to uphold the Democracy with one mind and heart, to be zealous in prosecuting the war, and to keep no terms with the usurpers at Athens. All the men of Samos took the same oath, and that island became for the moment the heart of the Athenian empire, from which the friends of liberty sent forth a double defiance against foreign and domestic foes.

But if this fine enthusiasm was to produce any results, some more practical measures were required, to provide for the future conduct of affairs. Athens, the seat of government, was in the hands of a tyrannical faction, and they could no longer look for guidance and counsel from that quarter. The situation was wholly without precedent, and some extraordinary step was required to meet it. But the men who served in the fleets and armies of Athens were not mere mercenaries, trained to blind obedience, and unaccustomed to think and act for themselves. Each one of them was, in some degree at least, a statesman, whose natural genius for politics had been developed in the liberal atmosphere of an imperial democracy. And, being now cut off from the proper centre of authority, they determined to take the fate of Athens into their own hands. Laying aside their military character, they constituted themselves into an independent civic assembly, to resolve and to act without consulting the home government. Their first proceeding was to depose some of the captains and generals, whose loyalty was suspected, and appoint others; of proved honesty, among whom were Thrasyllus and Thrasybulus, in their place.

Then, in a spirit of cheerful confidence, they entered on a lively debate concerning their plans and prospects for the future. "Athens has re-

volted from us," cried one witty speaker, summing up the situation in an epigram. Others followed in the same vein, and the general sense of their speeches may be given as follows:—"We have ample grounds for hope: the whole<sup>o</sup> naval power of Athens is concentrated here at Samos, a fine strategic centre, and so strong in native resources that it once defied for eight months the whole power of our empire. Holding such a position, we need have no fear of our supplies running short, and if we want funds we can raise contributions from the subject cities. We are therefore quite independent of the Athenians at home—we can do very well without them, but they cannot do without us. For more than a year we have kept the seas open, and saved Peiræus from blockade; and if they drive us to extremity we can stop the passage of the corn-ships, and starve Athens into a surrender. What have the authorities at home done for us, that we should shrink from any means of bringing them to their senses? They send us no pay, but leave us to provide for ourselves—they cannot even send us wise counsel, which is the proper business of the civil power, controlling the military, as the head directs the hand. Even in this we must be their teachers, and bring them back to a due respect for law and order."

Once more, as in the great days of Salamis, the fate of Athens was afloat, safeguarded by her

"wooden walls" and the strong arms of her sailors, but with this fatal difference, full of evil omen for the future of Greece, that even these gallant seamen now looked to the national enemy for countenance and help. For Alcibiades was living near at hand, and his influence was still believed to be all-powerful with Tissaphernes. Could he not be induced to throw in his lot with the patriots at Samos, and bring the gold of Persia to promote the good cause?

The ascendancy exercised by this extraordinary man over the minds of his contemporaries is perhaps the most remarkable feature in the later history of the war. Wherever we find him—in the free parliamentary debates of Athens—in the generals' tent at Rhegium—on the banks of the Eurotas—at the Court of Magnesia—he always takes the lead, always gives the decisive impulse to the course of events. With that easy versatility<sup>1</sup> which is the dominant note in the Athenian character, he is ready, at every turn in the shifting drama of Greek politics, to take up a new part—and his part is always the foremost. At his last appearance on the stage we saw him posing as Alcibiades the stern advocate of rank and privilege; and when the curtain rises on his next entrance he stands before us again, as Alcibiades the firm champion of popular rights. But under all these

<sup>1</sup> See the Funeral Oration of Pericles, *Thuc.* ii. 41.

disguises he is still the same selfish adventurer, without conscience and without heart. . .

The feeling of the Athenians at Samos towards their brilliant fellow-citizen may be described in the words of Aristophanes: "They long for him, they fear him—they cannot live either with him or without him." And it was not without difficulty that the proposal was carried to invite him over from Magnesia, and enlist this dangerous ally under the banner of Democracy. By the influence of the leaders a vote was obtained for his recall, and after four years the political gamester, the traitor now dyed with a threefold treason, once more stood up before the free assembly of his injured countrymen. After touching lightly on the subject of his banishment—that "little misfortune" which had been brought upon him, he said, by adverse fate—Alcibiades discoursed at large on the future prospects of Athens, which he confidently asserted were entirely at his disposal. "If Tissaphernes," he said, "can only be assured of your good faith, he will throw up his alliance with the Peloponnesians, provide pay for the Athenian crews, and bring to your support a powerful Phœnician fleet, which is now lying at Aspendus, waiting for the signal to sail westward. He has sworn to me that no Athenian sailor shall want his pay as long as there is a single gold piece left in his coffers—no, not though he is compelled to coin his own silver couch

into money. All he asks is my good word, as a guarantee for the fidelity of Athens."

Once under the spell of that winning presence, the Athenians at Samos forgot all their previous misgivings, and accepted his bragging speeches without dispute. He was immediately elected as joint commander with the other generals, with a free commission to act as he thought best for the interests of the State. And so unbounded was the confidence inspired by his promises that the words of some rash speaker were caught up with enthusiasm, and the cry went through the camp: "All danger is over in Ionia, and our arms are wanted at home: let us hoist sail for Athens, and put down the Four Hundred!" Alcibiades, however, who knew how visionary were the hopes which he had excited, exerted all his authority to prevent this wild suggestion from being carried out; and, having waited until saner counsels had prevailed, he crossed over again to Magnesia, where he continued to reside for the present, in his pretended character of mediator between Athens and Persia, paying frequent visits to the Athenian station at Samos, in order to keep up the show of negotiating an alliance with Tissaphernes.

It was on one of these occasions, when Alcibiades was present at Samos, that he had an opportunity of rendering a signal service to his countrymen. For just at this moment the envoys from the Four

Hundred, who had lingered at Delos, made their appearance in the Athenian camp, and, being introduced to the assembly, made an attempt to explain the purpose of their mission. But the voice of their spokesman was drowned by a shout of "Down with the traitors! Death to the subverters of the Democracy!" and many hands were raised to slay them on the spot. Order being restored by the efforts of Alcibiades and the other generals, they were allowed to make their statement. Then, suppressing all mention of the treasonable communications with Sparta, and assuming a tone of high and disinterested patriotism, they declared that the recent revolution was a wise and salutary reform, designed to check the unbridled licence of mob government, to stop the lavish waste of public money, and by confining the suffrage to men of substance and character to restore the tottering fabric of the state. In short, it was not an oligarchy, but a limited democracy of five thousand good men and true, which had been established at Athens. As to the tales of outrage and plunder circulated by Chæreas, they were malicious lies.

The orator had proceeded thus far with his specious harangue when he was interrupted by cries of rage and hatred, and the rest of his explanation was drowned by the uproar. A stormy debate ensued, and many proposals were made, but the one most in favour was that they should break up

their camp, and sail to Peiræus. Alcibiades saw clearly the ruinous consequences of such a movement, which would have involved the sacrifice of all that had been gained by the last year's fighting; and by urging these considerations on the excited multitude he succeeded in preventing so fatal a blunder. Then, addressing the envoys, he told them that he had no objection to the proposed reform, limiting the Democracy to five thousand, and that he highly applauded any measures of economy which would ensure to the soldiers the regular receipt of their pay. But the Four Hundred, he said, must go, the Senate of Five Hundred must be restored, and there must be no talk of making terms with the enemy.

With this message the envoys returned to Athens, where a new crisis was already approaching. Some time before, signs of jealousy and division had begun to appear among the partisans of oligarchy, and the more moderate members, who formed a large majority, were looking for an occasion to sever themselves from the violent faction headed by Pisander and Antiphon. There was a large number of sober and respectable men, who had sincerely wished for a reform in the constitution, from reflecting, no doubt, on the frantic excesses which had marked the later career of the Democracy. *But all their expectations had been defeated: the army at Samos was in open mutiny; some of the*

revolution The ablest of this party was Thera-  
menes, whose nature, cold, crafty and unscrupulous,  
eminently fitted him to play the part of a trimmer  
He had been disappointed in his personal ambition,  
and perceiving that the tide was turning against  
the usurpers he threw himself into the front rank  
of the opposition, hoping to be carried to the head  
of affairs by the rising flood of popular sentiment

On the return of the envoys from Samos, both  
sides prepared for the final struggle Antiphon  
and Phrynichus, as representatives of the extreme  
Oligarchs, at once set out for Sparta with instruc-  
tions to make what terms they could in the interests  
of their own party. Those of their friends who  
remained behind made all haste to complete the  
construction of a fort at Eetionea, a tongue of land  
commanding the entrance to the harbour of  
Peiræus, in order to facilitate the introduction of  
a Spartan garrison For they still held office as  
the only constituted rulers of Athens, regularly  
appointed by the vote of the assembly, and in  
virtue of that authority they were able to issue  
orders for the employment of labourers, and the use  
of materials from the public stores Accordingly  
the fort made rapid progress, and threatened on  
its completion to become a last stronghold for the  
forces of tyranny, and an open door for treason

Theramenes was well informed of the desperate  
designs entertained by Antiphon and his party,

cities subject to Athens had seized the opportunity to throw off their allegiance; and in Athens itself things had come to such a pass that there seemed no alternative between restoring the Democracy and surrendering to Sparta.

The party of reaction, who stood between the extreme Oligarchs and the rank and file of the Democrats, found a convenient handle for opposition in the fiction of the Five Thousand, which had so well served the purposes of Antiphon and his confederates. It was time, they said, to give real existence to this body, and thus fulfil the pledge by which the people had been induced to consent to a reform. Even some of those who had been foremost among the conspirators, and shared their worst crimes in the first stages of the revolution, now took the lead on the side of their opponents. For this defect is inherent in the nature of oligarchy, that it carries within itself the seeds of decay and dissolution. Under a democracy, the voice of the people is supreme, and an unsuccessful candidate for office acquiesces without resentment in the vote of thousands. But in a small clique of ambitious schemers every man wants to be first, and thinks himself slighted if he is left behind in the race for power. These motives had long been at work in the inner circle of the Four Hundred, producing a faction within a faction, and preparing the way for a counter-

revolution. The ablest of this party was Theramenes, whose nature, cold, crafty and unscrupulous, eminently fitted him to play the part of a trimmer. He had been disappointed in his personal ambition, and perceiving that the tide was turning against the usurpers he threw himself into the front rank of the opposition, hoping to be carried to the head of affairs by the rising flood of popular sentiment.

On the return of the envoys from Samos, both sides prepared for the final struggle. Antiphon and Phrynichus, as representatives of the extreme Oligarchs, at once set out for Sparta, with instructions to make what terms they could in the interests of their own party. Those of their friends who remained behind made all haste to complete the construction of a fort at Eëtionea, a tongue of land commanding the entrance to the harbour of Peiræus, in order to facilitate the introduction of a Spartan garrison. For they still held office as the only constituted rulers of Athens, regularly appointed by the vote of the assembly, and in virtue of that authority they were able to issue orders for the employment of labourers, and the use of materials from the public stores. Accordingly the fort made rapid progress, and threatened on its completion to become a last stronghold for the forces of tyranny, and an open door for treason.

Theramenes was well informed of the desperate designs entertained by Antiphon and his party,

and as soon as the fort began to rise at Eetionea he openly denounced their proceedings, and warned the people of the approaching danger. Loud murmurs began to be heard among the citizens, and when, shortly after the return of the envoys from Sparta, a Peloponnesian fleet appeared in the Saronic Gulf, the eyes of the dullest were opened, and an outbreak became imminent. Phrynichus was struck down in open daylight by the hand of an unknown assassin and immediately afterwards the workmen employed at Eetionea some of whom were Athenian soldiers, broke out into open mutiny, seized Alexicles, the officer in charge of the work, a well known Oligarch, and locked him up in a neighbouring house. When news of this occurrence reached the upper city, Theramenes, who was still nominally one of the Four Hundred, saw that the decisive moment was come, and leaving his seat in the Senate House, which was no longer a safe place for him, he hurried down to Peiræus. The whole city was now in an uproar, and wild rumours ran from mouth to mouth. Alexicles had been murdered, Peiræus was in the hands of the enemy, the last stand was about to be made between the Long Walls. The streets were thronged by an excited multitude rushing to arms, and but for the interference of the elder men who flung themselves into the crowd, protesting earnestly against the suicidal folly of civil strife



"Phrynichus was struck down in open daylight  
Iatten Wilson

when the enemy was close at hand, a scene of horror and bloodshed must have followed

When Theramenes reached Eetionea he found the soldiers standing to arms, in expectation of an attack from the troops of the Four Hundred. He was accompanied by two or three of the hottest Oligarchs, and true to his character, which taught him, as long as possible, to keep on friendly terms with both sides, he gently rebuked the men for their insubordination. But his tone was so mild that the mutineers were encouraged to ask his true opinion as to the building of the fort—whether it was for the good of Athens, or not. “If you think it better that it should be demolished,” he replied, “I think so too.” The soldiers waited for no second bidding, but mounted the walls, and began to pull them down. They were assisted by an eager throng of people, who came flocking up from the harbour town, to take part in the work of destruction, and as tier after tier of stones went down, the word was passed about “Lend a hand here, whoever is for the Five Thousand!” For some anxiety still lingered in their minds which prevented them from saying “Whoever is for the Democracy!” So strong was the hold taken on their imaginations by the crafty device of Antiophon.

The demolition of the stronghold of Oligarchy furnished a salutary vent for the first impulse of popular fury, and after their bloodless victory the

armed citizens, whose numbers had been raised to a formidable aggregate by thousands who joined them from all quarters of the city, were more disposed to listen to counsels of moderation. After some negotiations, it was agreed that a mass meeting should be held in the theatre of Dionysus, to concert measures for the common welfare. But on the day appointed, when every approach to the theatre was thronged by an eager crowd, hurrying to take part in the great debate, news was brought from Peiræus which turned all thoughts in another direction. The Peloponnesian fleet, *consisting of forty-two triremes, had been descried* off the coast of Salamis, heading towards Peiræus. Alarmed by this new danger, which seemed to fulfil their worst suspicions, the citizens hastily armed themselves, and rushed in full force to defend the approaches to the harbour. There seems to be little doubt that Agesandridas, the Spartan admiral, was acting on a previous agreement with the last envoys from the Four Hundred, and expected to obtain a landing by the aid of a garrison stationed for the purpose at Eetionæa. But he had delayed too long: the fort was no longer there, the Four Hundred had fallen, and every access to the harbour was held by their opponents. So he drew off his fleet and, rounding the promontory of Sunium, dropped anchor at Oropus, threatening a descent on Eubœa.

The possession of this island was of vital importance to the Athenians, who drew from it the principal part of their corn supply. Fully alive to their danger, they did what they could to avert a loss which would place Athens in a state of blockade. A small fleet of triremes, in poor condition, and manned by untrained crews, put out from Peiræus, and took up its station at Eretria, on the coast of Eubœa, opposite to Oropus. Agesandridas watched his opportunity, when the Athenian crews were gone ashore to prepare their morning meal, and sweeping suddenly across the channel caught the Athenians unawares, and gained an easy victory. Twenty-two ships fell into his hands, and the revolt of Eubœa immediately followed.

Of all the calamities which had befallen the Athenians there was not one, in the whole course of their history, which produced such utter dismay as this last blow. Their situation seemed, indeed, desperate: at home the state had not yet recovered from the fever of revolution, which might break out again in violence at any moment; their only available fleet was destroyed; famine stared them in the face; and the armament of Samos, the last hope of Athens, had thrown off its allegiance. They expected nothing less than an immediate attack on Peiræus, which would probably have anticipated the final catastrophe by several years. But they were saved for the time by the extraordinary inertness of

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the Spartans who proved themselves on this as on many other occasions, to be "the most accommodating of enemies."<sup>1</sup> Slowly the dark cloud passed away, and the Athenians, recovering from their panic, obtained time to look around them and set their house in order. Once more united in their old house of assembly, they passed a bill for the deposition of the Four Hundred and the restoration of the democracy, on the limited basis proposed by Antiphon. But this restriction was never intended to be permanent and before long the old constitution of Cleisthenes and Pericles resumed its sway. It remained to take righteous vengeance on those guilty men who in the hour of their country's greatest need had sought to compass her destruction. Most of them had fled for refuge to the enemy's camp, but Antiphon, the worst criminal of all, remained at Athens confident that his matchless eloquence would secure him an acquittal. In this, however, he was disappointed, for, though his speech at the trial excited the highest admiration, he was condemned to death, and suffered the just penalty of his crimes.

Thus by peaceful means and without any of those sanguinary reprisals so common in the internal history of Greek cities a vile conspiracy against the liberties of Athens was put down. The Commons of Athens had set a noble example

<sup>1</sup> *Thuc* viii 96

of mercy and forgiveness to those who called themselves their betters; and the great historian from whose work this part of our narrative is taken, though his own sympathies leaned decidedly towards the party of privilege, has borne an emphatic testimony to the moderation shown by the people, after such bitter provocation. It would have been better, perhaps, if a more searching inquiry had been made, and sterner measures taken to prune away the rotten members of the State. For treason still lurked in the heart of the imperial city, and was soon to appear again, in the hour of her humiliation and defeat.

## CHAPTER III .

### THE END OF THE STRUGGLE

DEMOCRACY was restored at Athens in the month of July, and in the twenty-first year of the war<sup>1</sup>; and we must now sketch briefly the course of events in the islands and coastlands of Asia since the beginning of the year. After the interview between Alcibiades and the oligarchical conspirators at Magnesia, Tissaphernes, pursuing his policy of balancing between the two contending powers, concluded a third treaty with the Peloponnesians, who were then still at Rhodes. This compact differed in several points from the two former ones. All pretensions on the part of the king to Greek territory were now confined to Asia; Pharnabazus, satrap of the Hellespont, was one of the contracting parties; and Tissaphernes formally announced his intention of bringing up the Phœnician fleet, to act against the Athenians. Shortly afterwards, Astyochus took up his station again at Miletus, and Clearchus, a Spartan officer, was sent to raise revolts among the Athenian dependencies on the

<sup>1</sup> 411 B.C.

Hellespont. But at length the lukewarmness of the Spartan admiral, who was bribed to inaction by Tissaphernes, excited such grave suspicion among the home authorities that Mindarus was sent out to supersede him. For some time the new admiral was cajoled by the artifices of Tissaphernes, who went away to Aspendus, under pretence of bringing up the Phœnician fleet. With him went Alcibiades, well pleased to have an opportunity of parading his influence with the satrap, who, as he well knew, had no intention of fulfilling his promise.

Time went on, and no sign of the promised succours appeared; and at last Mindarus, convinced that he had been deluded, set sail from Miletus, with the intention of shifting his operations to the Hellespont. He was closely pursued by Thrasyllus, with the whole Athenian fleet; and a general engagement took place in the narrow waters of the Hellespont, in which the Athenians gained a slight advantage. Indecisive as the victory was, it caused a wild outburst of delight among the Athenians at home—a melancholy proof of their feeble and exhausted condition.

Towards the close of the year, Mindarus, strengthened by reinforcements from the home fleet, was enabled to resume the aggressive, and two naval actions followed, in which he gained some advantage. Encouraged by these successes,

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he determined to strike a decisive blow, and setting his whole fleet in motion, engaged the Athenians who were commanded by Thrasyllus and Thrasybulus, near his own station at Abydos. The battle lasted until evening, and was still undecided, when the scale was turned by the sudden appearance of Alcibiades, who had been cruising in the Ægæan, and now arrived with twenty ships just in time to secure the victory for the Athenians. Thirty of the Peloponnesian ships were captured and their entire fleet was only saved from ruin by the spirited exertions of Pharnabazus.

Want of funds prevented the Athenians from following up their advantage, and during the winter their fleet was dispersed in flying squadrons, sent out to levy forced contributions among their allies. Alcibiades took the opportunity of paying his respects to Tissaphernes, who had recently arrived at the Hellespont, wishing to renew his relations with the Spartans, and detach them from his rival Pharnabazus. His shuffling policy had excited displeasure at the Persian court, and in order to make plain his hostility to Athens, he ordered Alcibiades to be arrested, and conveyed in custody to Sardis. After a month's confinement, Alcibiades managed to escape, and made his way to the Athenian station at Cardia, on the northern side of the Thracian Chersonese. His

arrival infused new spirit into the Athenian camp, and just at this moment the fleet was brought up to its full strength by the addition of thirty triremes from Athens, and twenty more, which had been employed in collecting money. The whole force now sailed round to Proconnesus, an island in the Propontis,<sup>1</sup> within a few hours' sail from Cyzicus, an important city in the Athenian alliance, which just before had been attacked and taken by Mindarus. Animated by a spirited address from Alcibiades, the Athenians made a vigorous assault, drove in the Peloponnesian fleet, and continuing the battle on land carried all before them, and gained a complete victory. Cyzicus was recovered, the impoverished exchequer of Athens was replenished by a rich booty, and the whole of the northern waters, from the Bosphorus to the Hellespont, were swept clear of the enemy's ships. The forlorn condition of the Peloponnesian survivors is vividly illustrated by a laconic despatch from Hippocrates, the secretary<sup>2</sup> of Mindarus, which was intercepted by the Athenians on its way to Sparta: "Fleet ruined—Mindarus slain—men starving—know not what to do."

The news of this great victory inspired the Athenians at home with new hopes, and encouraged them in the belief that they might yet emerge

<sup>1</sup> Sea of Marmora.

<sup>2</sup> A sort of vice-admiral.

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triumphant from their long struggle. One most important result of the battle was that it reopened the passage for the corn-ships from the Euxine, and ensured to them an abundant supply of food; and Agis, when he saw the heavily freighted vessels, as they rounded the cape of Sunium, and dropped anchor at Peiræus, felt how useless was the occupation of Decelea, as long as this source of supply was left open. The Spartans, never very sanguine in their temper, again began to despond, and, according to one account, they sent envoys to Athens with offers of peace. Xenophon, however, who is our chief authority for the period, makes no mention of this embassy, and the details are not sufficiently certain to justify the outcry commonly raised by modern historians against the folly of the Athenians and the boisterous arrogance of their demagogues.

For the rest of the year<sup>1</sup> little change took place in the relative position of the combatants. Immediately after the battle of Cyzicus, the Athenians established a fortified post at Chrysopolis, the port of Chalcedon, on the eastern side of the Bosphorus, and levied a toll of one-tenth on all ships from the Euxine passing the strait. On the other hand, the generous zeal of Pharnabazus in the Peloponnesian cause did not abate. He collected the starving and homeless crews of the ruined fleet, provided

<sup>1</sup> 410 B.C.

them with clothing, money and food, and bade them never despair for the loss of "timbers," as long as their persons were safe and sound. Some of the men found employment by discharging garrison duty in the towns of his satrapy, while others were sent to Antandrus, and set to work on the construction of new triremes, for which the neighbouring forests of Ida furnished an inexhaustible supply of timber.

In the following year Alcibiades, supported by Thrasyllus, with fresh forces from Athens, was able to render important services to his country.<sup>1</sup> The Peloponnesians and their Persian allies were defeated near Abydos, and the capture of Chalcedon and Byzantium confirmed the hold of the Athenians on the great trade route from the Euxine. Pharnabazus now began to waver in his friendship towards Sparta, and after the fall of Chalcedon he entered into a treaty with the Athenian commanders, agreeing to conduct an embassy on behalf of Athens to the court of the Great King at Sousa. The prospects of the Athenians seemed to be growing brighter every day, but a few months later<sup>2</sup> a new and powerful ally appeared on the side of Sparta, whose hearty co-operation changed the whole face of affairs, and

<sup>1</sup> It should be observed that, to a Greek, the word "country" meant his native city, with the adjacent territory.

<sup>2</sup> Spring, 408 B.C.

within three years brought the long and weary contest to an end.

The reigning king of Persia at this time was Darius Nothus, whose younger son, Cyrus, was a favourite of the queen mother, Parysatis. Not long before an embassy had arrived at the Persian court from Sparta, with strong complaints against the double dealing of Tissaphernes. The result of this application was that Cyrus was sent down from Sousa, with an extensive commission, appointing him governor of Lydia, Phrygia, and Cappadocia, and placing at his disposal a large military force. Cyrus was an energetic and clear-sighted man, uncompromising in his hostility to Athens, and determined to spare neither pains nor expense to break down the power which for sixty years had set bounds to the aggressions of Persia.

Such was the man who now met the Athenian envoys, as they were proceeding on their way towards the interior of Asia. In the interview which followed, the Spartans who accompanied Cyrus boasted loudly of the success of their missions, and when the young prince exhibited his credentials, bearing the seal of the Great King, the last hope of Persian aid for Athens faded away. The Athenians were left under the custody of Pharnabazus, who was obliged to become their gaoler, to save them from harsher

treatment, and three years elapsed before they were set at liberty.

The further proceedings of Cyrus will shortly be related. For the present we must return to Alcibiades, whom we have seen for two years actively employed in the service of his country. After the overthrow of the Four Hundred a decree had been carried in the assembly for his recall, and his brilliant achievements since that date had made him the foremost figure in the eyes of his fellow-citizens, and the centre of all their hopes. He was cruising in the *Ægæan*, collecting money, and keeping an eye on the enemy's movements, when he received tidings that he had been elected general, with Conon and Thrasybulus as his colleagues. His thoughts had long been turned homeward, but even now he hesitated, as well he might, to trust himself in the city on which he had inflicted such deadly wounds. But being assured by his friends of a favourable reception he put to sea, with twenty ships, and, after eight years' absence, dropped anchor in the harbour of Peiræus.

It was afterwards noted, as a circumstance full of evil omen, that the day on which he landed was set apart in the Attic calendar as an occasion of public mourning, when no serious business might be transacted. On that day the ancient statue of Athena was stripped of its ornaments, and shrouded from public view, to undergo a

ceremonial cleansing at the hands of certain holy men whose hereditary privilege it was to perform this solemn service. And the coincidence was interpreted as showing that the goddess had veiled her face in anger, at the return of the man who had been cast out of his country for mocking the sacred mysteries of heaven.

These, however, were afterthoughts, and the temper of the vast crowd which thronged the quays of Peiræus to welcome back the exile was, with few exceptions, friendly and forgiving. A thousand eager advocates were ready to make excuses for this wayward child of genius, who had been banished as they asserted, on a false charge and thrust, against his will into the arms of his country's enemies. His great qualities had raised up against him a faction of meaner men who had plotted to get him out of the way, to leave room for the display of their own little talents, and everyone knew how Athens had fared since her affairs had been left in the hands of these wretches.

In this generous mood the multitude stood waiting, as the little fleet passed the harbour mouth and slowly approached the landing stage. All eyes were directed to one familiar face, still majestic in its manly beauty, though marked by the stormy passions of more than forty years. A slight quiver passes across his features as his



Alcibiades  
Photo Alinari

glance rests on that sea of faces: perhaps some little visiting of remorse has reached his guilty heart, as he remembers the day when he last left that haven, in command of a mighty fleet, all his thoughts bent on glory and conquest. Can it ever be wiped out, that long record of crime—the ruin of two great armaments—the fatal fortress, still towering on the heights of Decelea—the revolt of Ionia—the dark days of the Four Hundred? It is all his work, and he shudders as he thinks of the awful mischief which he has done.

Some touch of compunction may perhaps have entered into his feelings; but his predominant sentiment was apprehension for his own safety. Ordering his galley to heave-to some distance from the quay, he stood up on the deck, and peered anxiously about, until he caught sight of Euryptolemus, his cousin, and other trusty friends, who were gathered in a group close to the water. Reassured by their looks, he at last put in to land, but even then, as if dreading violence, he kept aloof from the crowd, and made his way, surrounded by his adherents, to the upper city.

But his reception, both in the Senate and in the popular assembly, was such, that all these misgivings soon died away, and were succeeded by a double measure of self-confidence and presumption. He had hoped, at the best, for

indulgence and forgiveness, and he found himself the hero of the hour, all his errors explained away, the recent victories, which were only his in part, attributed solely to his valour and skill, and all the hopes of Athens centred in his own person. Nothing was omitted which could soothe his vanity or feed his love of power. The sentence which had been passed against him eight years before was reversed, his property, which had been confiscated, was restored, the curse pronounced upon him by the priestly colleges was revoked, and the leaden plate upon which it was engraved flung into the sea, and he himself was elected general with absolute powers, with a force of a hundred triremes, fifteen hundred Athenian hoplites, and a hundred and fifty horse men<sup>1</sup>. So sudden an exaltation, after years of outlawry and exile, was enough to turn a stronger head than his, and we shall presently see that the consequences were disastrous, both to Athens and himself. For the present, however, he was the greatest man in Greece, and he remained in Athens until the autumn, collecting his armament, and enjoying the brief fruits of his triumph. This delay enabled him to perform a service which was peculiarly grateful to the feelings of his countrymen. For the most solemn festival of

<sup>1</sup> Some of these details are supplied by Diodorus and Plutarch

the whole year was approaching, which lasted for nine days, and was famous throughout all Greece, under the name of the Eleusinian Mysteries. On the seventh day, according to immemorial custom, the worshippers marched in procession along the Sacred Way from Athens to Eleusis, to receive the final rite of initiation. Since the occupation of Decelea the procession had been conducted by sea, which involved the omission of many characteristic ceremonies. Alcibiades announced that, on this occasion at least, the festival should be celebrated with all its accustomed splendour, and after stationing pickets on the surrounding hills, to guard against surprise, he led the pious multitude, numbering many thousands along the usual route to Eleusis, and when the rites were ended escorted them safely back to Athens. Having thus propitiated the offended goddesses,<sup>1</sup> and gained a new title to the gratitude of his fellow citizens, he embarked his troops, and crossed the sea to Samos.

Meanwhile a new commander had been sent out from Sparta to take control of affairs at the seat of war. This was Lysander, the last of those three eminent Spartans who left a deep mark on the history of the period.<sup>2</sup> He was a true

<sup>1</sup> Demeter and Persephone, whose rites he was said to have profaned.

<sup>2</sup> Brasidas, Gylippus, Lysander.

Spartan, strict in his observance of that austere discipline which was enjoined by the code of Lycurgus, brave, judicious, and superior to all the vulgar temptations of pleasure and self-indulgence. But mingled with these high gifts were other qualities, rendering him unfit for the great place which he was called upon to fill. He was avaricious, cruel, perfidious, and insatiable in his personal ambition. In short, though one of the greatest, he was one of the worst of the Greeks, and the results of his administration were in the end calamitous, not only to Sparta, but to the whole Hellenic world.

During the three years which had elapsed since the battle of Cyzicus a new fleet had been got together, and Lysander, who made his headquarters at Ephesus, had at his disposal a force of seventy ships. He lost no time in paying his court to Cyrus, and his reception by that young potentate, who was then at Sardis, was cordial in the extreme. There was to be no more double dealing, said the prince, no more of that balancing between the contending parties, which had so long paralysed the arm of Sparta. He was determined to put down the power of Athens, if it cost him his last gold piece, and the Great King, his father, was of the same mind.

On the strength of this assurance, Lysander ventured to ask that the Peloponnesian crews

should be paid at the high rate of a drachma<sup>1</sup> a day for each man, arguing that this would be an economy in the long run, as it would induce the Athenian sailors to desert, and thus shorten the war. To this, however, Cyrus would not consent, without express warrant from the king. —The pay, he said, must remain fixed at the previous rate of half-a-drachma a day. For the moment Lysander had nothing to say in reply; but in the evening he was entertained at supper in the palace, and Cyrus, after drinking his health, bade him ask something for himself. "Add another obol<sup>2</sup> to my men's wages," was the prompt answer, and Cyrus immediately granted his request, at the same time expressing his high admiration at such disinterested behaviour.

The caution of Lysander was not less conspicuous than his courage. He declined an encounter with the Athenian fleet, which was superior to his own in numbers and efficiency, and remained quietly at Ephesus, repairing his ships, and ready to strike when he could take the enemy at a disadvantage. Finding that he was not to be provoked into an action, Alcibiades relaxed his vigilance, and went off to the mainland, to take part in some operations against one of the coast towns, leaving the whole fleet in

<sup>1</sup> About equivalent to ninepence halfpenny.

<sup>2</sup> One sixth of a drachma.

levity in entrusting so vast a responsibility to a wretch like Antiochus. He had now to pay the penalty for his negligence and soon after his return to Samos he was deprived of his command, which was distributed among ten generals, among whom were Conon and Thrasyllus. Finding himself treated with contempt in the camp he took ship from Samos and established himself in certain fortified posts which he owned in the Chersonese.

At the beginning of the following year<sup>1</sup> Lysander's term of office came to an end, and he was succeeded by Callicratidas. The new admiral found himself in a difficult position owing to the crafty and selfish policy which had been pursued by his predecessor. Lysander had established a close correspondence with the leading Greeks of Ionia, whom he attached to his person by promising to promote their ambitious designs in their own cities, as soon as he had brought the war to a successful issue. These men were not disposed to transfer their allegiance to a new patron, whose frank and manly character gave little encouragement to their factious aims. Loud murmurs arose against the impolicy of the Spartans, in recalling their officers as soon as they had gained some knowledge of affairs and sending out men who came as strangers among the allies of Sparta and who were sometimes personally unfit for command.

charge of Antiochus, his steersman and boon companion, with strict orders not to hazard an engagement during his absence. Unfortunately Antiochus was a braggart and a fool, and he amused himself by sailing up and down in front of the Peloponnesian ships, and defying the captains to come out and fight. Lysander at first sent out a few triremes to drive him off, whereupon the Athenians left their moorings one after another to support their commander, and a general action ensued, in which the Peloponnesians had the better, and captured fifteen ships.

The loss to Athens was comparatively slight, but the effect of the mishap on the minds of the Athenian people was ruinous to Alcibiades. Wild rumours had already reached Athens of his profligacy and insolence, of drunken orgies in the voluptuous cities of Ionia, and of oppression and extortion committed against the Athenian allies; and the news of the late defeat raised a general outcry against him. Alcibiades had presumed too far on the restored confidence of his countrymen, and, forgetting that he was on his good behaviour, he had allowed his old vices to resume dominion over him. He was, indeed, crippled by the want of funds, and this may explain the fact that he had effected nothing with the splendid force at his disposal. But nothing can excuse his criminal

levity in entrusting so vast a responsibility to a wretch like Antiochus. He had now to pay the penalty for his negligence, and soon after his return to Samos he was deprived of his command, which was distributed among ten generals, among whom were Conon and Thrasyllus. Finding himself treated with contempt in the camp, he took ship from Samos, and established himself in certain fortified posts which he owned in the Chersonese.

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Lysander had done all that he could to foment these grievances, and, in order still further to embarrass his successor's movements, he had paid back to Cyrus the balance remaining in his hands from the funds received for the payment of the Peloponnesian crews. The general discontent was shared by the leading officers in the fleet, and Cyrus, who had given his whole confidence to Lysander, was displeased by his removal, and looked coldly on the man who had supplanted him.

Thus confronted by difficulties on all sides, Callicratidas acted with firmness and decision. Summoning the leading Spartans before him he addressed to them a dignified and straightforward remonstrance. "I have come out here," he said, "not to serve my own views, but to carry out the commands of Sparta, by whose authority I hold this command. If, however, my presence is displeasing to you, I am ready to resign my appointment, as I can do nothing useful without your hearty support." By this candid statement Callicratidas won the hearts of his subordinates, and they all declared that it was his duty to remain at his post. One serious obstacle was thus removed, but, being sorely straitened for funds, he was compelled to go up to Sardis, and apply to Cyrus for a subsidy. But the haughty prince refused him an audience, and, after one or two

attempts to gain admission to the palace, Callicratidas turned away in disgust. "How wretched," he cried, as he turned his back on Sardis, "is the condition of the Greeks, to be obliged to come begging for money at the gates of barbarians! O shame to Greece, and shame on the miserable feuds which brought us to this pass! If ever I reach home in safety, it shall be my first endeavour to make peace between Athens and Sparta."

So noble was the spirit which animated this true patriot, making him an almost unique exception among the public men of Greece, to whom anything like national sentiment was practically unknown. But his generous aspirations would have found small sympathy at Sparta, and the immediate problem which he had to face was how to carry on the war without the aid of Persian gold. In order to show himself to be independent of Cyrus, he changed the station of his fleet from Ephesus to Miletus, and after having despatched a few triremes to procure a supply of money from Sparta, he summoned an assembly of the Milesians, and addressed them as follows:—"You, who have recently suffered many things at the hands of the Persians,<sup>1</sup> should know better than any what dependence on the barbarian means to Greeks. I ask you, therefore, to help me in breaking off this degrad-

<sup>1</sup> Miletus had been handed over to Tissaphernes after the first treaty, 412 B.C.

ing connection, by voting a temporary subsidy, to carry on the war until money is sent from Sparta. Let us show these barbarians that we Greeks can settle our own quarrels amongst ourselves, without paying suit and service to them."

The high-minded zeal of this gallant Spartan broke through the net of intrigue in which Lysander had tried to involve him. All opposition was silenced, and the Milesians immediately voted a large grant of money, several of them adding contributions from their own private purses. Callicratidas was now in a position to enter on active operations, and having equipped fifty new triremes, which raised the number of his fleet to a hundred and forty sail, he put out from Miletus, and proceeding to Methymna, the second city of Lesbos, he summoned the inhabitants to surrender, and on their refusal he attacked the place, and carried it by storm. The Athenian soldiers who had been left there as a garrison were sold into slavery<sup>1</sup>: for such was the barbarous practice of the time, and even Callicratidas had no power to contravene it. But when his allies called upon him to extend the same treatment to the citizens of Methymna, he firmly refused, declaring that, so far as he could prevent it, no Greek should be brought to bondage by his act.

<sup>1</sup> This fact, which is distinctly stated by Xenophon (II. I. vi. 15) has been strangely overlooked by Grote (c. 64).

Meanwhile the Athenian admiral Conon, who was now in command at Samos, had been hovering with his fleet off Methymna, watching the movements of Callicratidas, but unable to effect anything against an enemy whose force was double his own. Elated by his victory, Callicratidas now assumed the style of lord of the sea, and sent a message to Conon, warning him to cease meddling with the Spartan's lawful bride. Conon knew that this was no empty vaunt, and early next morning he got his ships under weigh, intending to take refuge in the harbour of Samos. He was hotly pursued by the Spartan fleet and, finding himself hard pressed, he was obliged to run for safety into the sheltered creek which forms the northern port of Mytilene. But Callicratidas caught him at the mouth of the harbour, captured thirty of his ships, drove the rest ashore under the walls, and then, sending for reinforcements, prepared to form the blockade.

Mytilene was soon completely invested, both by sea and land, and Conon's only hope was to contrive some means of conveying to Athens the news of his desperate situation. Choosing two triremes, the best in his fleet, he quietly prepared them for a voyage, and kept them at their moorings, avoiding every appearance which might excite the suspicions of the enemy. The rowers, all picked men, were sent on board every day before sunrise, and the

fighting men lay concealed in the hold. Then the vessels were shrouded from stem to stern with their canvas covers, as if they were laid up in dock, and thus they remained all day, waiting for a favourable moment to start. In the evening the men went ashore for refreshment and repose. For four days this manœuvre was repeated, without any opportunity being offered for the daring attempt. But on the fifth day, at the sultry hour of noon, Canon seeing that the guardships were keeping a careless watch, gave the signal. In a moment the galleys were stripped of their covers, the men bent to their oars, and the fleet vessels bounded forward at racing speed, heading for the mouth of the harbour. They succeeded in passing the blockading fleet, and on reaching the channel between Lesbos and the mainland they parted, one steering south towards the open sea, the other taking a northerly course, in the direction of the Hellespont. Wild was the commotion among the Peloponnesian crews when they saw the two galleys leap from their stations, dart across the harbour, and disappear behind a jutting headland. Instantly a score of vessels cut their cables, and went off in headlong pursuit. But they seem to have confined their attention to the trireme which had steered south, and after a hot chase she was caught overpowered and towed back to Mytilene. The other, which was

sailing northward, got clear away, and reached Athens in safety.

On receiving Conon's despatch the Athenians braced themselves for an extraordinary effort. A general muster was ordered, including every able-bodied man in Athens, whether slave or citizen; and within thirty days a fleet of a hundred and ten triremes sailed from Peiræus for Samos. In the meantime orders had been sent round, summoning every ship engaged on service in the Ægean to join the main fleet; and when these had all come in the total number of the armament was raised to over a hundred and fifty vessels. Having completed their array, the generals put out with their whole force from Samos, and took up a position off the islands of Arginusæ, close to the mainland, and opposite to the south-eastern extremity of Lesbos. On the same day Callicratidas sailed out from Mytilene with a hundred and twenty vessels, and came to an anchor off the promontory of Malea, leaving Eteonicus, with fifty triremes, in charge of the blockade. Evening came on, and the twinkling lights of the Athenian fleet were clearly visible across the strait. Thinking to take the enemy unawares, Callicratidas left his moorings at midnight, and put out with his whole fleet into the channel. But this design was frustrated by a violent thunderstorm, accompanied by torrents of rain, which blotted out the view,

and hindered his advance. At daybreak the clouds lightened, and the sun shone out on the two mighty armaments, arrayed front to front. Two hundred and seventy triremes, and more than fifty thousand men, were afloat in the confined space between Lesbos and the mainland.

The disposition of the opposing fleets showed how vast was the change which had been wrought by twenty years of naval warfare. In the days of Phormio the Athenians were ready to encounter almost any odds, and the Peloponnesian seamen could hardly be induced to face them, regarding their seamanship as something almost supernatural. But now the position was, to a large extent, reversed: Callicratidas, relying on the superior skill of his rowers, drew up his fleet in a single line abreast; while the Athenian commanders trusted mainly to the bulk and weight of their wings, which were disposed in double lines, each consisting of sixty triremes.

At the very last moment, just before the action began, Callicratidas, who commanded on the right wing, was advised by his pilot, a Megarian named Hermon, to draw off his fleet, and wait for reinforcements. "See how strong they are," said the experienced seaman. "We shall never break through the solid structure of their wings, and their centre is backed by the islands, which form a second line of defence." "It is not for me to

fly," replied the heroic Spartan. "If I fall, there are better men to take my place." Saying this, he gave the signal, and with his own vessel led the charge. For some time the two fleets preserved their original formation, and the battle raged fiercely along the whole line. Then all order was lost, and trireme engaged with trireme, as they chanced to meet. The struggle was maintained with equal courage and obstinacy on both sides, and for a long time the issue remained doubtful. But at last Callicratidas, in the act of charging an Athenian ship, was flung from his station on the prow into the sea, and perished. His men still fought on stubbornly after their leader's death, but by degrees the superior numbers of the Athenians prevailed, and the whole Peloponnesian fleet was put to flight, with a loss of more than seventy ships.

When Eteonicus received news of the defeat, he contrived by a stratagem to secure the retreat of the whole of the blockading squadron, which he despatched to Chios, he himself proceeding with the land forces to Methymna. Conon was thus left free to join the victorious Athenian fleet, which then proceeded to its station at Samos.

The battle of Arginusæ was the greatest naval action in the whole course of the war, and it might seem that the result was a brilliant triumph for Athens. But two circumstances altered the whole

character of the event, rendering it deplorable in the eyes of all true lovers of Greece. One of these was the death of Callicratidas, whose noble and enlightened patriotism might have tempered the bitterness of these suicidal feuds, and turned the energies of Greeks against their natural enemies.

Between him and Lysander, who now stepped into his place, there was a moral gulf which nothing could bridge, and the elevation of that able but unscrupulous man gave a new impulse to all the causes which had long been working for the ruin and degradation of his nation.

The other incident which threw a tragic gloom over the Athenian victory has now to be related. After the battle the Athenian commanders returned for the moment to their moorings off the islands of Arginusæ, leaving twenty five disabled and water-logged vessels, with their surviving crews, at the mercy of the winds and waves. Two officers, Theramenes and Thrasybulus, were charged with the duty of rescue, and forty seven ships were assigned to them for the purpose. But they were prevented by a storm from executing their orders, and the result was that, with the exception of a few who saved themselves by swimming, these unfortunate men, not less than two thousand in number, were all drowned. Such are the facts as given by Xenophon, though the account was afterwards complicated by the contradictory statements

of opposing speakers. On the lowest estimate, the number of the disabled triremes was not less than twelve; and, supposing this report to be the true one, it still leaves the Athenian generals charged with the awful guilt of abandoning a thousand brave men, who had borne the chief brunt in the action, to die by a lingering death.

In the official despatch sent to Athens after the battle the generals said nothing of the order given to Theramenes and Thrasybulus, but simply stated that they had been prevented by the violence of the weather from saving the shipwrecked crews. With the exception of Conon, who of course was exonerated, having been shut up in Mytilene, they were deprived of their posts, and commanded to present themselves at Athens and give an account of their conduct. Six of them obeyed the summons; of the remaining three, one had died at Mytilene, and two preferred to go into voluntary exile. Among the six were Thrasyllus, distinguished both for his championship of democracy and for his recent achievements in the war, and Pericles, son of the great statesman of that name. In their preliminary examination before the Senate, they repeated the statement made in their despatch, resting their defence on the tempest which had arisen after the battle. It was decided that they should be kept in custody until the assembly met to deliberate on their case.

When the generals appeared before the assembly a new accuser stood up against them. This was Theramenes, whose acquaintance we have made already, first as a partaker in the worst crimes of the Four Hundred, and afterwards as leader of the democratical reaction. He now denounced the generals as responsible for the death of the Athenian seamen, alleging in proof the terms of their despatch, in which no attempt was made to shift the blame on anyone else. The narrative of Xenophon is obscure, confused, full of gaps, and deeply coloured by malignant prejudice against the Athenian Democracy. But his words here seem to imply that the motive of Theramenes in making this attack was his desire to screen himself, and rebut a charge circulated against him by the generals after their return to Athens. This charge, shifting the responsibility on to Theramenes and Thrasybulus, was now publicly made by the generals in their reply. But the whole point of the accusation was destroyed when they repeated their statement about the tempest, which, as they admitted, had made the rescue of the sailors impossible. There seems to have been a certain amount of equivocation on both sides, and we cannot now determine at whose doors the chief guilt lay.

The speeches for the prosecution and defence, and the subsequent examination of witnesses,

occupied the attention of the assembly until a late hour, and the debate was then adjourned. In the meantime the Senate was directed to institute proceedings for the formal trial of the generals. Hitherto the temper of the people had been moderate, and even favourable towards the accused. But before the case came up again their feelings were exasperated to the highest degree by an unhappy coincidence, which sealed the fate of the generals, and led to the commission of a grave judicial crime. Just at this time was held the feast of the *Apaturia*, an ancient Ionic festival, during which the Athenians met, according to their clans and families, for the performance of various ceremonies connected with the old tribal divisions, and the promotion of hospitality and social enjoyment. It was a time of good cheer and good fellowship, when old ties of friendship were renewed, families which had been separated were reunited, and a spirit of kindness and brotherhood prevailed throughout the city. Very different were the feelings excited at the Feast of the Clans which was held in the autumn of that sad year. Many a familiar face was missing, and many another was disfigured by grief. Among the gaily-dressed multitude thousands were seen clothed in black raiment and with their heads shaved in token of mourning. The effect produced on a sensitive and excitable race by such a contrast to the ordinary

associations of the festival may easily be imagined. In every social circle one topic superseded all others and a general cry was raised for summary vengeance on the authors of all this misery.

With such feelings of passionate resentment the Athenians met once more in their assembly to decide on the fate of the generals. In every community there are always men of weak and diseased minds, who are eager to snatch at a chance of brief popularity by pandering to the worst impulses of the multitude. To this class belonged Callixenus, who now brought forward a motion, already proposed and carried by him in the Senate, that the assembly should at once proceed to their verdict on the guilt or innocence of the six generals collectively, and that if found guilty they should be put to death, and their property confiscated. This proposal was doubly illegal, for the Attic law provided that every accused person should be tried singly, and appointed properly constituted juries to sit upon his case. Accordingly Euryptolemus, a relative of Pericles, with one or two others, denounced the motion, and threatened Callixenus with impeachment. But they were overborne by clamour, and violently abused for daring to impugn the sovereign rights of the people. In the midst of the uproar a man came forward, and announced that he was the bearer of a message from the shipwrecked men to the Athenian people. "I myself," he said, "was

one of those who were left clinging to the disabled vessels ; but I saved myself by means of a floating meal tub, and as I went drifting past, the drowning sailors called to me, and said *Tell the Athenians that we did our duty like men, and were left to perish by the negligence of the generals* "

When they heard this message from the dead, the Athenians, already highly excited, were wrought up to the point of fury, and their attitude became so menacing that Euryptolemus was compelled to withdraw his notice of impeachment. It remained for the Prytanes or presiding senators, to put the motion of Callixenus to the assembly, and after some demur they were driven by threats to break the law of which they were the constituted guardians. There was however, one memorable exception the philosopher Socrates, who was serving his turn as Prytanis on this occasion resolutely refused to participate in the cowardly compliance of his colleagues. But his opposition was simply ignored, the motion was put and carried, and the mock trial proceeded.

Euryptolemus now made a final effort in the cause of common sense and fair play. "I stand here for law," he said, "I ask nothing but bare justice for the accused, though one of them is my relative, and another an intimate friend. If they are found guilty, let them suffer the extreme penalty which the law allows. Only let them not be denied the rights

which are allowed even to the worst criminals—they who have come home crowned with glory for the greatest victory gained by our fleets in the whole course of the war. Let each of them have due time to prepare his defence, and then let his case be decided separately on its own merits, without haste or passion, by a properly constituted jury, and with a strict observance of every judicial form. What motive can be alleged for hurrying these men, unheard and unjudged, to execution? If they are worthy of death, they are in the strong grip of the law, and cannot escape their sentence; but if they are innocent, and you condemn them without a trial, you will be laying up shame and remorse for yourselves in the near future. Oh, be warned in time, and bring not this dark stain on yourselves and on Athens, the home of justice, and the mother of law!"

*Euryptolemus* seems to have been heard with patience, but his words produced no effect, and the question being put to the vote, according to the motion of *Callixenus*, all the six generals were found guilty, and sentenced to drink the hemlock. When it was too late, the Athenians repented of their precipitancy, and sought, as was their wont, to take vengeance on their evil advisers. *Callixenus*, with four others, was arrested, and ordered to find sureties for their appearance on the day of trial. But the affairs of Athens were then in a

state of disorder, and in the prevailing confusion they found means to escape. At a later date Calixenus returned; but, though he was then secured by a general amnesty from prosecution, he was so overpowered by the abhorrence which he found on every side that he sought a voluntary death by starvation.

The outburst of hysterical excitement which followed the battle of Arginusæ, and led to the illegal condemnation of the generals, was a symptom which had appeared several times during the Peloponnesian War, marking the gradual decay of the Athenian character. Athens had won her great position by the high public virtue of her citizens, and the hearty co-operation of all classes for one common end. But when once these bonds were relaxed, when passion and prejudice began to sway the counsels of her people, when class was arrayed against class, and the civil and military power became divided by a wider and ever wider gulf, the final catastrophe could no longer be averted. The immediate result of the deplorable sentence passed on this occasion was to undermine the loyalty of those who held high military command, and open the door to corruption and treason.

At the opening of the following year<sup>1</sup> an urgent petition was preferred to the Spartans by their allies at Chios, Ephesus and elsewhere, requesting

that Lysander should be again sent out to take command of the fleet. It was contrary to Spartan usage to appoint the same man twice as *navarchus*, or chief admiral, this office was accordingly conferred on Astacus, and Lysander was given him as secretary, with the understanding that the real authority should be held by Lysander. Vigorous measures were at once set on foot to get together a new fleet. The triremes stationed at Chios were summoned to Ephesus, to undergo thorough repairs, and new vessels were placed on the stocks at Antandrus. On the application of Lysander, Cyrus furnished a fresh supply of money, and so excellent was the understanding which subsisted between the young prince and the Spartan official that, shortly afterwards when Cyrus was called away from his satrapy by an urgent message from his dying father, he left the whole administration of his province, with unlimited control of the revenues, in the hands of Lysander. "Be wary," he said, in giving his last injunctions, "there is no need of haste, all the wealth of Persia is behind me, and I am resolved to see this matter out. Delay, therefore, to strike, until you are quite sure of your prey."

As soon as his fleet was ready, Lysander put to sea, attacked and took by storm one of the coast towns in the neighbourhood of Ephesus, and then steered for the Hellespont, with the object of

regaining control of that great trade route and the important cities which had been recovered by Athens after the battle of Cyzicus. At Abydos which was still held by Sparta, he obtained the assistance of a land force, which was directed to follow his movements along the coast, and, thus supported, he proceeded to Lampsacus, and carried the town by storm. The possession of this wealthy and famous city gave him a first rate station for his fleet with abundance of wine and all kinds of provisions, and enabled him to choose his own time for engaging the enemy.

The Athenian fleet, numbering a hundred and eighty sail and commanded by Conon, with five other generals, was employed at this time in ravaging Chios. As soon as they were informed of Lysander's departure the generals set out in pursuit with their whole force, and cast anchor at Elæus, a town situated at the south western extremity of the Chersonese. Learning here that Lampsacus was captured, they sailed on through the Hellespont, until they came to a place called Ægospotami, a deserted tract of coast, exactly opposite to Lampsacus. Here they took up their station as if intending to do battle without delay. They had every reason for forcing on an engagement for their fleet was superior in numbers and efficiency, and the place which they had chosen was most unsuitable for a lengthened stay, being

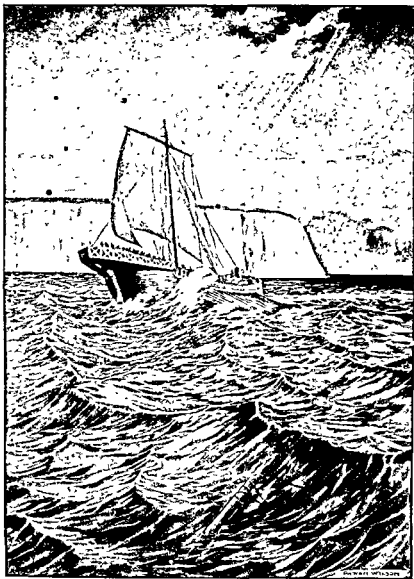
an unsheltered beach, with no proper anchorage and nearly two miles from Sestos from which all supplies had to be fetched. On the next day, therefore, the order was given at sunrise for a general advance and rowing across the channel the great armament swept down towards the harbour of Lampsacus threatening an attack. But if they had hoped to find Lysander off his guard, they were doomed to disappointment. That cautious commander, who had at least as much of the fox as of the lion in his nature, had made all his arrangements over night, and when the Athenians appeared they found the whole Spartan fleet drawn up in line, close to the shore, with a strong body of troops behind them ready to lend aid. Not venturing to attack in conditions so unfavourable, they drew off their ships and rowed back to Ægospotami. As soon as they had retired, Lysander sent a detachment of swift sailing vessels to follow them across the channel, and kept the rest of his ships at their stations until he was assured that all chance of attack was over for that day. This manœuvre was repeated for four successive days and, as Lysander persistently declined an encounter, the Athenians grew careless, and began to straggle about the country, leaving their fleet without sufficient guard. From his station at Lampsacus the cunning Lysander watched the success of his strategy with growing satisfaction, and prepared to

strike the final blow. One last warning came to the Athenians from an unexpected quarter, and, if it had been followed, the war might well have been brought to a very different ending, by the total destruction of the Spartan fleet. Just before the final catastrophe, the generals were surprised by a visit from Alcibiades, who was living in the neighbourhood. He earnestly remonstrated against the folly of keeping the fleet in an exposed station, confronted by a watchful enemy, who had a rich city at his back, and entreated them to remove their quarters to Sestos, where they could choose their own time for an engagement. But he found himself treated as an impertinent meddler, and the only response vouchsafed to his prudent counsels was the insulting question: "Are you commanding this fleet, or are we?" He was therefore compelled to retire, and leave these misguided men to their fate.

Then the blow fell, swift, sudden and overwhelming. On the fifth day the Athenians, as usual, appeared off Lampsacus, and, their challenge to battle being once more declined, turned and rowed back to their station, full of contempt for so cowardly a foe. Again they were followed by the flying squadron from Lampsacus, which remained hovering off Ægospotami until the Athenian crews were disembarked and scattered about the country. But this time the officer in charge, who

had received his orders from Lysander, hove to on his way back in the middle of the channel, and flashed a bright shield across the waters, as a signal that the hour was come. Then, at a word from the admiral, the whole Spartan fleet sprang from its moorings, rowed at full speed across the Hellespont to Ægospotami, and fell upon the defenceless Athenian armament. More than half the crews were ashore, and resistance was impossible. Only the faithful Conon was at his post, with nine vessels one of which was the *Paralus*, the state trireme. Seeing that all was lost he despatched the *Paralus* to carry the gloomy tidings to Athens, and then made haste to get out of the way with his tiny squadron. He succeeded in making his escape, and found a refuge at the court of Evagoras, Prince of Cyprus. All the rest of the fleet, to the number of one hundred and seventy triremes and many thousands of prisoners, fell into the hands of Lysander.

Thus, without a blow struck, without the loss of a single man to Sparta, the great naval power of Athens, which had risen to something approaching its former splendour, was totally annihilated. So complete and sudden a collapse cannot be explained by any degree of negligence on the part of the Athenian commanders. There was more than negligence—there was guilty connivance, there was deliberate treason and corrupt bargain-



The "Paralus"  
Patten Wilson

ing with the enemy. The whole transaction—the choice of a station, almost the worst that could be conceived—the pretended attack on Lampsacus, a farce repeated on five successive days—the neglect of every precaution, and the final surrender, without even a feint of resistance—all these are facts pointing to the inevitable conclusion that the Athenian armament was bought and sold. For the deadly taint of corruption, that “dire disease,” which the great orator<sup>1</sup> bewails at a later period, only too prevalent even in the best age of Greek history, had sunk deeper and deeper into the life of the people, and Athens was betrayed by the “itching palm” of her highest officials. Of the six commanders, Conon showed by his conduct that he was above suspicion, and one other, Philocles, was put to death by Lysander, for alleged cruelty to prisoners taken in the Ægæan, so that he also can have had no part in the infamous bargain. A third general, Adeimantus, was openly accused of receiving bribes from Lysander, and there is every reason to believe that the remaining three were implicated in his crime. After twenty-seven years of fighting, the prediction of Archidamus<sup>2</sup> was fulfilled, though not in the sense which he intended, and gold, foreign gold, had won the day.

The news of the disaster in Sicily had trickles

<sup>1</sup> Demosthenes, *De Falsa Legatione*.

<sup>2</sup> *Thuc.* i. 83.

in gradually, leading the minds of the Athenians by slow degrees to face the inevitable consequences of their irreparable loss. But on this occasion there was nothing to break the shock, no shadow of doubt or uncertainty to veil the hideous truth. One night in September the sleepers in Peiræus were roused by a cry of agony and despair, beginning in the quarters about the harbour, and rising and swelling until it penetrated to every corner of the populous town, and then rolled on, up the space between the Long Walls, and overflowed the upper city with a wave of woeful sound. Before long the streets and public places were thronged by a terror-stricken multitude, and each new-comer caught up and repeated the cry: "The *Paralus* is in the harbour—our fleet is captured—all lost, all lost!" In that hour conscience awoke among the Athenians, reviving the memory of their own misdeeds, and aggravating their fear by the sharp sting of remorse. What hope had they of mercy, who had shown none? What plea could they urge, to save them from the fate which thousands of Greeks had found at their hands—for themselves, to be butchered in cold blood, and for their wives and children, a life of bondage?

Day by day crowds of forlorn fugitives came thronging into the city, driven from Byzantium, Chalcedon, and other towns in the Hellespont

and the Ægæan, which Lysander had taken in his victorious progress. For the Spartan admiral, now sure of his prey, moved with deliberation, securing every step in his advance, and compelling all the Athenians who fell into his power to proceed to Athens, in order to increase the distress and hasten the surrender of the doomed city. At last, towards the end of the year, he sent notice to Sparta, and to Agis at Decelea, to announce his approach. Thereupon a great muster was ordered of the whole Peloponnesian force, and when all the allies were assembled they marched into Attica, and pitched their camp in the suburb of Academus, about a mile from the northern gate of Athens. Soon after Lysander sailed into the Saronic Gulf with a hundred and fifty ships, and after ravaging Salamis, and restoring the banished Æginetans, moored his fleet off the mouth of Peiræus. The two outer harbours had already been blocked up by the Athenians, at the first news of the disaster.

Athens was thus completely invested by sea and land, and all Greece, with the exception of Samos, had declared against her. Yet the Athenians, though in sore straits from the scarcity of provisions, still tried to keep up some show of dignity, and offered to become the allies of Sparta, on condition of retaining their Long Walls and the fortifications of Peiræus. This proposal was re-

jected with contempt, and the Spartans insisted that at least a mile of the Long Walls must be destroyed. To this the Athenians, though many were actually dying of hunger, would not consent; for they knew the deep duplicity of the Spartans, "masters of lying, forgers of deceit,"<sup>1</sup> and dreaded that the demand might be a mere pretence, masking some darker design against their lives and liberties. In this terrible dilemma Theramenes offered to go on a mission to Lysander, and find out what were the real intentions of the Spartans towards Athens. His offer was accepted, and for three miserable months the Athenians were kept in suspense, waiting to learn their fate. On his return he simply announced that Lysander had referred him to the authorities at Sparta, and the pressure of famine had by this time become so fearful that he was immediately despatched at the head of an embassy with full powers to make what terms he could with the enemy.

It was a memorable day in the history of Greece when the Spartans summoned their allies to decide what degree of mercy could be extended to their prostrate rival. Of those who took part in that debate there were some, and chief among them the Thebans and Corinthians, who demanded that the tyrant city should be blotted out of the map

<sup>1</sup> Euripides, "*Andromache*," 447.

of Greece, and her territory turned into a sheep walk. To this, however, the Spartans would not consent, and assuming a tone of lofty patriotism they declared that they would never sanction so vindictive a sentence against a city which had once performed such services to Greece. Their real motive was the desire to preserve Athens as a useful ally, and a counterpoise to the power of Thebes. The decision of Sparta was not to be disputed, and accordingly Theramenes was sent back to Athens, bearing the following terms of capitulation:—"The Long Walls, and the fortifications of Peiræus, shall be thrown down; the Athenians shall surrender all their ships, except twelve, shall recall their exiles, and shall enter into a defensive and offensive alliance with Sparta." Considered in their character as leaders of the Peloponnesian League, the Spartans had betrayed the interests of their allies; but in this instance the selfish and calculating policy, for which they were notorious,<sup>1</sup> was the means of conferring a signal benefit on Greece and on mankind.

The Athenians, whose very existence was hanging in the balance, waited with fearful anxiety for the return of Theramenes, and as soon as he entered the gates he was surrounded by a haggard, famine-stricken multitude, clamouring to hear what message he brought from Sparta.

<sup>1</sup> *Thuc.* v. 106.

## 106      Stories from Xenophon

But he put them all aside, and deferred his communication until the assembly met on the following day. Even then there were a few stubborn spirits who were for holding out to the end preferring death to submission, but the vast majority voted for the acceptance of the terms offered. As soon as their decision was made known to Lysander, he sailed with his whole fleet into the harbour of Peiræus. Then at last the Athenians felt the full depth of their humiliation, when they saw their dockyards, their arsenals and their storehouses the source and the symbol of their power, in the hands of the spoiler, and were jostled in their streets by rude troops of hostile seamen. Not the least part of their humiliation was the presence of those traitors who had fled from just vengeance to the enemy's camp and now returned in the train of Lysander, exulting in their country's ruin.

Forthwith the order was given to begin the work of demolition, and thousands of eager volunteers hastened amid the joyous sounds of the flute, to lend a hand in pulling down the fortress of tyranny for such was the current cant of the hour. But those who hailed that day as the beginning of a new era of liberty for Greece were soon to learn that in getting rid of one master they had only made room for another, far more cruel and oppressive.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE TYRANNY OF THE THIRTY AT ATHENS

THE empire of Athens had lasted altogether for about sixty years, dating from the foundation of the Confederacy of Delos to the defeat of the Athenians in Sicily. Though marred by some acts of high-handed aggression, it was, on the whole, a great and memorable achievement, and the only successful attempt to combine the scattered units of the Greek nation for a high patriotic end. The downfall of Athens left the Spartans undisputed masters of Greece, and we have now to see what use they made of the great opportunity which was thus placed in their hands.

It has been already mentioned that when Lysander was first sent out to Ionia he established, in each of the several cities, a party devoted to his own person, composed of a few wealthy and ambitious men, whose selfish views he undertook to promote, in return for base subserviency to himself and to Sparta. This deplorable system was subsequently extended to all the communities which had formerly owed allegiance to Athens. The affairs of each city were administered by a close

corporation of ten local magnates, subject to the control of a Spartan officer, called a Harmost who was in command of a Spartan garrison. The rule of these Decarchies, as they were termed, was marked everywhere by the same features—murder, spoliation, and every kind of outrage, committed against the helpless citizens and their wives and children. The mild rule of Athens was succeeded by the worst horrors of oligarchy and usurpation, and in these horrors the Athenians themselves were now to have their full share.

Chief among the exiles who accompanied Lysander on his triumphal entry into Athens was Critias, a man whose career affords a striking proof how little the highest intellectual attainments can avail to elevate the character or soften the heart. Critias was a wealthy and powerful noble, belonging to the inner circle of the old Attic aristocracy, his great talents made him a conspicuous figure in that brilliant group which gathered round the great teacher, Socrates, he had gained distinction as a poet and his speeches were long preserved as models of polished and graceful oratory. But all these splendid gifts of nature and fortune only served to gain him a pre-eminence in infamy. He was a cold sensualist notorious for his private vices even in that dissolute age, a bad citizen, who gloried in the degradation of Athens as a fine occasion for gratifying his lust of power and his

rancorous hatred of democracy; a pitiless enemy and a treacherous friend.

Xenophon, our chief authority for this period of Greek history, leads us to suppose that the usurpation of the Thirty was brought about in a constitutional way, by the free vote of the Athenian assembly. "In the following year,"<sup>1</sup> he says, "the people resolved to elect thirty men to draw up a code of laws for the reform of the constitution." The real facts of the case have to be gathered from other sources, and especially from the speeches of Lysias. For months before the final capitulation of Athens, the leaders of the oligarchical clubs had been actively engaged in organising the forces hostile to democracy, and as soon as the surrender had taken place they joined hands with the returned exiles, and prepared for a second revolution, more thorough and uncompromising than that of the Four Hundred. As a preliminary step, a board of five managers, with the title of Ephors, was appointed to direct the movements of the party; among these was Critias, and probably also the veteran intriguer, Theramenes, who at anyrate bore a leading part in the earlier stages of the revolution. The Senate was found a useful tool, being composed chiefly of men whose sympathies were oligarchical; and the people were cowed and dispirited by their misfortunes. Accordingly the conspirators, who

<sup>1</sup> 404 B.C.

formed a compact and organised body, and had the Spartans at their back, met with little or no opposition when they arrested the most prominent supporters of democracy, and threw them into prison.

Though thus far successful, Critias and his party thought it necessary to call in the aid of Lysander before proceeding further with their designs against the liberty of Athens. On his arrival a proposal was submitted to the assembly, naming thirty commissioners to draw up a new scheme of constitution, and form a provisional government. Though thus moderate in form, the proposed measure was sufficiently startling to rouse a deep murmur of disapprobation among the people. Thereupon Theramenes sprang to his feet, and sharply rebuked the citizens for murmuring against the yoke which was held up before them. "I care nothing," he said, "for your cries: many of the Athenians are on our side, and what we intend has the full approval of Lysander and the Spartans." This frank avowal was promptly confirmed by Lysander himself, who told the people that they had better take heed for their own safety, and not trouble themselves about the form of government under which they were to live. Their lives were forfeit, he declared, as they had broken the terms of the capitulation, by neglecting to complete the demolition of their walls within the time prescribed. *After this significant threat*

all opposition was silenced; the respectable part of the citizens left the meeting, and stole away to their homes, with pale and troubled faces, and the measure was then carried by the vote of a small and despised minority.

The rule of the Thirty at Athens lasted altogether for about twelve months, and that year was remembered ever afterwards by the Athenians with lively abhorrence, and remained branded with a mark of peculiar infamy as "the year of anarchy." They began, however, with a studied display of moderation and public spirit, which seemed to belie the fears of the people, and encouraged young dreamers like the philosopher, Plato,<sup>1</sup> to hope that a true aristocracy, a rule of the best, had at last been set up at Athens. Having purged the Senate of all obnoxious members, and reconstituted the various magistracies in their own interests, they instituted a general prosecution against the pestilent race of informers, which had increased and thriven to a fearful extent under the democracy, and afforded an endless theme to the satirical pen of Aristophanes. The informer—or sycophant, as he was called at Athens—was a man who made a living by hunting out offenders against the law, and bringing them to trial before the Athenian juries. If successful in his suit, he received part of the fine as a recompense for his labour. We have noticed before that the

<sup>1</sup> Then twenty-four years of age, Critias was his uncle.

poorer Athenian citizens derived no small part of their income from the fees paid for service on juries, and their earnings from this source increased in proportion to the number of persons accused. The jury, therefore, fed the informer, and the informer fed the jury, and the consequence of such a system was to multiply the number of malicious prosecutions, and foster that love of litigation which is one of the chief reproaches against the Athenian Democracy. Naturally the informer chose his victims among the wealthiest class, and many a quiet and harmless citizen, who had grown rich by steady industry, was entangled in the meshes of the law, and stripped of his property by the machinations of these greedy knaves. Consequently it was easy for the Thirty to include with the informers in one sweeping indictment all those who were "dangerous to the better sort of citizens," or, in other words, all men of democratic sympathies. The manner of conducting these trials soon opened the eyes of those enthusiasts who had supposed that a new era of law and justice had begun. The judicial powers of the people were transferred to the Senate, and to prevent all chance of an acquittal each senator was compelled to record his vote openly, before the eyes of the Thirty. In these conditions the trial became a mere farce, and in many cases even this empty formality was omitted, sentence of death being passed by an arbitrary edict of the tyrants.

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Hundreds had now perished by the hands of the executioner, and as yet no sign of resistance had appeared among the citizens. But Critias and his friends knew that they were surrounded by a bitterly hostile population, and they were determined not to rest until they had set up a tyranny, open, lawless and shameless. In order to effect this end they applied to Lysander for an armed force, to be quartered in the city until, as they said, they had made a clean sweep of "the baser sort," and established the new government on a sure foundation. Lysander willingly complied, and before long a Spartan garrison, commanded by Callibius, was stationed on the Acropolis, the very shrine and centre of Athenian liberty. Critias, and those of the Thirty who shared his views, had now a band of armed satellites always at hand, who were kept in good humour by high pay and frequent donations, and were ready to lend effectual aid in any act of violence. Blood now flowed more freely than ever, and the blows were carefully aimed at those citizens who, from their high and independent character, were known to be the natural leaders of the people. Many of the friends of liberty were thus cut off, and many more fled from the city, among whom was Thrasybulus, whom we already know as one of the stoutest champions of democracy. They were all included by the Thirty in a common sentence of exile and confiscation.

But these latter excesses of the tyrants were not allowed to pass unchallenged. Theramenes foresaw that the violence of Critias would drive the people to desperation and fan into a flame that democratic sentiment which had proved fatal to the tyranny of the Four Hundred. Wishing to avoid an open breach with his colleagues he began with a civil remonstrance and pointed out the imprudence of provoking hostility where none had been shown, by declaring open war against the whole body of the Democrats. But Critias scornfully repudiated these nice distinctions. "We cannot afford," he said, "to be scrupulous. Whether you like the term or not our government is a tyranny—it matters not whether of one or of thirty—and we must make root-and-branch work, clearing out of our way all who oppose, and all who are likely to oppose us." And so the work of butchery went on, until a general panic spread throughout the city, and the number of exiles increased every day. No man now felt himself safe for greed soon began to take the place of political hatred, and a pretext was readily devised for the slaughter of a wealthy citizen when murder was a short and easy way to spoliation. By a refinement of cunning and cruelty the Thirty contrived to implicate the most respectable among the citizens in their crimes, by ordering them, with terrible threats in case of refusal, to arrest the unfortunate men whom they had selected as the victims of their

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own avarice Few were found hardy enough to dispute the tyrannical command, but Socrates, at least, formed an honourable exception, steadfastly refusing to lend himself as an instrument of oppression

Theramenes saw that, if this state of things continued, it must soon lead to some violent explosion and, hoping still to effect a compromise, he advised the Thirty to widen the basis of their power, by associating with themselves a select body of the citizens, as partners in the government The hint was taken, and the Thirty drew up a list of three thousand Athenians, on whom they bestowed some sort of nominal franchise Still Theramenes expressed himself as by no means satisfied, and ridiculed the measure as both inadequate and impolitic What special virtue, he asked, was there in the number of three thousand, as if no one outside that aggregate could be an honest man? And did not the Thirty perceive that, by thus restricting the number of their adherents, they were exposing their own weakness, and leaving the majority of the people arrayed in armed hostility against them? Once more the shrewd criticism of Theramenes led to a result very different from what he intended Issuing orders for a general review of the adult male population, the Thirty managed by a stratagem to deprive all but the Three Thousand of their

arms, which were conveyed for safe keeping to the Acropolis.

Athens now lay prostrate, as it seemed, at the feet of her tyrants, and the persecution raged more hotly than ever. For the greed of the Thirty was insatiable, and the maintenance of the Spartan garrison involved them in heavy expense. They therefore resolved to open a new source of revenue by dealing out rapine and murder among the resident foreigners in Athens and Peiræus, many of whom were men of wealth and influence. It was agreed that each of the Thirty should take one of these denizens, selected, of course, from the richest of the class, as his own especial booty. But when it came to the turn of Theramenes to make his choice he indignantly declined to take any part in so nefarious a transaction. "You call yourself nobles," he sarcastically observed, "and by way of justifying the title you act even worse than the informers, the basest of mankind. They content themselves with plundering their victims, but you are not satisfied unless murder is added to confiscation."

These bold words were equivalent to a declaration of war against Critias and his adherents. There were many, both in the Senate, and among those who formed the outer circle of the government, who secretly sympathised with Theramenes; but, unfortunately for him, all the organising energy

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and the means of armed offence were on the side of his opponents, who knew that they had sinned beyond forgiveness, and that, if the party of Theramenes was allowed to raise its head, they would be ruined. They determined, therefore, to bring matters to an immediate issue, and began by approaching the individual senators, to whom they denounced Theramenes as a turncoat and traitor. Then they summoned a meeting of the whole body in the Senate House, where they had previously posted a band of their own satellites, armed with concealed daggers, and ready for any act of violence. On the entrance of Theramenes, Critias rose to address the Senate, and began by defending the policy of extermination which had been pursued by the Thirty as the only course possible in a city like Athens, with a teeming population accustomed so long to the full riot of democratic licence. "Consider," he continued, "what our position is: we are a little group of good men and true, the master spirits of the time, separated from the Democrats by an impassable gulf, hating them, and hated by them. We can only hold our own by the favour of Sparta, and to the Spartans democracy is not less odious than to us. Therefore, I say our watchword must be: No quarter to anyone who opposes us, least of all when opposition comes from the heart of our own body." Here he paused, and indicating Theramenes by an angry gesture,

burst out again in louder and fiercer tones, "The traitor is here—here, in the midst of us is the worst enemy of our order. Yes, you Theramenes, have thwarted us at every turn, you are the most factious demagogue of them all. Had you played this part from the first we should have had cause to hate you, but we could not have called you knave. But who led the attack on the Democrats and encouraged us to throw in our lot with Sparta? Who was the most active in dragging the popular leaders to trial? Who but you Theramenes? And now, having brought all this accumulated mass of odium on our heads and embittered the minds of the people against us, you suddenly change front and come forward as a champion of liberty, denouncing us as the shedders of innocent blood. But we might have known," resumed Critias, turning again to the senators "what to expect from this man the most notorious traitor and turncoat in Athens who is nicknamed *the buskin*<sup>1</sup> because he serves all parties and is constant to none. Beginning his career as a favourite of the people he espoused the cause of oligarchy at the time of the Four Hundred, and shared in all their anti popular measures, then, seeing that a change was imminent, he changed sides again and gained credit as a true friend of the constitution. Every change of government, is always accompanied by bloodshed, and,

<sup>1</sup> A shoe fitting both feet

in all the blood which has been shed during the civil struggles of the last seven years, Theramenes has the largest share. Then consider his conduct at the trial of the generals after Arginusæ; knowing that he himself was responsible for the loss of all those lives, he contrived to shift the guilt from his own shoulders, and hounded those unhappy men to their death. But his last and foulest act of treason has been committed against us, and if we suffer him to escape we shall be confessing our own weakness, and giving our enemies a leader schooled in sedition. Let us strike, then, before it is too late, and by an act of summary justice destroy the hopes of all who desire our ruin."

Undismayed by this bitter and violent harangue, Theramenes rose to reply, and defended himself with great vigour and skill. After touching on his conduct after Arginusæ, and protesting his innocence on that occasion, he proceeded to deal with the chief count in the indictment brought against him by Critias—the charge of treason against the Thirty. It was Critias, he declared, and those like him, who had shown themselves the worst traitors to their party, by abusing the power entrusted to them, and thus alienating the sympathies of all respectable citizens. As long as they had confined their attacks to the avowed enemies of the government he had given them his full and hearty approval. But when, forsaking this course, they entered on a career of

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The speech of Theramenes was greeted by the Senate with a hearty burst of applause, and Critias, seeing the impression he had made, and knowing that an acquittal would be fatal to himself, resolved to try the effect of intimidation. So he made a sign to his hired bravoës that they should form up close to the railing which fenced off the senators from the other part of the house, and then retired for a short space to exchange a word with the Thirty. On his return to the chamber he addressed the senators in these characteristic terms: "It is the duty of a good president to prevent his friends from being led into error; and this duty I now mean to discharge. And here," he added, pointing to his satellites, who were pressing close up to the bar of the house, "are a number of worthy gentlemen, who declare that they will not suffer a detected traitor to escape. Now there is an article in our new code of laws which states that anyone not included in the list of the Three Thousand may be put to death by a decree of the Thirty, while those who are so included have the right of being tried by the Senate. Here, then, is the name of Theramenes"—with these words he held up a paper, containing a list of the Three Thousand—"and *thus*, I strike it out"—drawing a pen through the name—"proclaiming his life forfeit, by order of the Thirty."

Confounded by this outrageous violation of

plunder and oppression, he had condemned their proceedings, as both cruel and unwise. The introduction of an armed garrison, the spoliation of resident foreigners, and the disarmament of the citizens, were acts of lawless tyranny, calculated to discredit them in the eyes of all honest men. All these measures he had resisted, wishing, if possible, to save the more violent members of the Thirty from the consequences of their own folly. "Do you not see," he continued, addressing himself to Critias, "that by such behaviour you are playing into the hands of our enemies and driving thousands who would otherwise be friendly or neutral to take sides against us? Thrasybulus, I am sure, follows your frantic course with delight, knowing that you are driving headlong to destruction, and that every fresh crime of yours brings the day of reckoning nearer. You call me turncoat, traitor, and throw in my teeth the policy which I pursued at the time of the Four Hundred. It is quite true that I deserted them, but not until they themselves had forsaken the paths of loyalty and honour, and plotted to betray our city into the hands of the Spartans. I have been consistent in all my changes, remaining always the firm opponent of all excess, whether perpetrated by the many or by the few. And you too, Critias, have been consistent in your own way, making it ever your single aim to attain a bad pre-eminence in cruelty and greed."

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justice, for which he was totally unprepared, Theramenes sprang for refuge to the sanctuary of Vesta, the tutelary goddess of domestic and civic life, and clinging to the altar made a last appeal to the senators: "Will you suffer these men to trample on their own laws and cancel the rights which they have sworn to respect?" But reading no hope on those pale and downcast faces he said: "I see how it is: violence reigns supreme, and the laws are mute; yet for your own sakes, gentlemen, it would have been wise to make a protest, for the same hand which has struck out my name can strike out yours." While he was yet speaking, the officers of the Thirty drew near, and with a last despairing cry, invoking the vengeance of heaven on his murderers, he was dragged from the altar, and hurried away to execution. All the way to the prison he continued to protest in a loud voice against the lawless tyranny of which he was the victim; and when Satyros, a brutal ruffian, who had charge to carry out the sentence, bade him hold his peace, or it would be the worse for him, he coolly answered: "And will it be the better for me if I do hold my peace?" As soon as he reached the prison they brought him the decoction of hemlock, which was the usual mode of execution at Athens. He swallowed the draught with perfect composure, and jerking the remaining drops on the floor, after the practice of Athenian



"This is for the lovely Critias  
Patron Watson

rushed out upon them, armed with a dagger, but he was slain from a distance by a shower of javelins and arrows. Timandra, a woman with whom he was living, performed the last offices to his body.

In Alcibiades we have an early example of that desperate moral infirmity which in later times became a standing reproach against the Greeks as a nation.<sup>1</sup> Judged by the extent and variety of his talents, he was the foremost man of his age, but all his great gifts were perverted to unworthy ends, so that they became a curse to himself and his countrymen. From him Plato drew his portrait of the tyrannical man, in whom every good impulse has been overgrown by the foul weeds of vice and self-indulgence, until the very soil is corrupted, and can produce nothing but the poisonous flowers of vanity and pride. Never, perhaps, in history was so fair a promise so completely belied in the fulfilment.

By the murder of Theramenes the Thirty, as they thought had got rid of the last obstacle to their tyranny, and the policy of "thorough" which had been advocated by Critias was pushed to its furthest limit. First, they issued an order that all citizens not included in the list of the Three Thousand should leave Athens, and, not content with this, they carried their persecutions into the country.

<sup>1</sup> See especially the *Third Satire* of Juvenal.

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districts, where the vineyards and olive grounds, now newly planted, offered an alluring bait to their cupidity. Thousands took refuge in Peiræus, and as this proved an insecure retreat many more found an asylum at Megara and Thebes.

It was from the latter city, so long numbered among the bitterest enemies of Athens, that the deliverer came. In the eighth month of the tyranny, towards the end of December, Thrasybulus set out from Thebes, with a little band of seventy resolute men, and took up his position at Phyle, a mountain stronghold commanding the main route between Thebes and Athens. The weather was remarkably fair and calm, and as soon as the Thirty got news of this daring movement they marched along the open roads, with their whole force of infantry and cavalry, to dislodge the intruder. But Thrasybulus, whose numbers had by this time increased, met their first attack with firmness, and they were driven back with some loss. The Thirty then determined to reduce the place by blockade, but they were compelled to retire by a violent snow-storm, which came on suddenly, and raged without intermission for two days. After this success, hundreds flocked to reinforce the garrison of Thrasybulus, and his attitude became so threatening that a strong force of Spartan hoplites, with two companies of cavalry, was despatched from Athens to check his incursions. They pitched

their camp in a wood, about two miles from Phyle, and waited for an opportunity to strike at the invader. But Thrasybulus, who had now a force of seven hundred men at his disposal, was too quick for them. Descending from his position by night, he chose a place of ambush close to their camp, and lay there until the day began to break. Then, just at the moment when the night watch was being relieved, and the grooms in the enemy's camp were noisily currying their horses, he gave the order to charge. The surprise was complete, and without the loss of a single man Thrasybulus swept all before him, killing a hundred and twenty of the hoplites, and Nicostratus, a horseman, surnamed The Fair, with two more who were caught in their beds.

This second repulse filled the Thirty with alarm, and they determined to occupy Eleusis, as a place of retreat, in case their position at Athens became untenable. The measure was carried out with even more than their usual cruelty and treachery. One day Critias, with some of his colleagues, made his appearance at Eleusis, attended by a strong body of the Athenian horsemen, the wealthiest class in Athens, and the staunchest supporters of their tyranny. Here they issued a proclamation, commanding all able-bodied men to present themselves for enlistment, and appointing the place of muster in a building with a postern gate which

opened on the beach. The order was obeyed, and as each man entered his name he was directed to make his exit through the postern door, where he was promptly seized and bound under the eyes of the horsemen, who were drawn up in a double line on either side of the gate. The prisoners were then conveyed to Athens, and delivered to the custody of the Eleven, whose business it was to carry out the arbitrary decrees of the Thirty; and on the next day Critias summoned the Three Thousand, together with the horsemen, to the Odeum, and addressed them as follows:—"Gentlemen, the present government is administered by us for your benefit, quite as much as for our own, and, as you have your full share in its privileges, you must not flinch from its risks. In order, therefore, that your fortunes may be involved with ours you must condemn the Eleusinians now in custody to death." The Spartan garrison was stationed near at hand, to overawe any attempt at resistance; and under such pressure the wretched prisoners were condemned by an open vote and led away to execution.

This last outrage seems to have brought fresh adherents to the camp of Thrasybulus, and shortly afterwards he left his station at Phyle, and, marching by night, entered Peiræus, now an unfortified town. His force, which numbered a thousand men, was much too weak to defend the whole circuit of so extensive a place, and accordingly he

resolved to make a stand at Munychia, just at the point where the road from Athens enters that suburb of Peiræus by a steep ascent. His hoplites formed a solid front, eight ranks deep, and behind them, on the crown of the hill, was a multitude of archers, javelin men, and slingers who had flocked to his support from the harbour town, and stood ready to cover his advance with a shower of missiles. Presently the enemy were seen approaching in a dense column fifty shields deep, and, as their progress up the steep hill was slow, Thrasybulus had time to address a stirring appeal to his men, reminding them of their recent victory, and recalling to their memory all that they had suffered at the hands of the Thirty. "The gods," he said "are manifestly on our side: a few days ago they sent a snowstorm to baffle our enemies, and now they are bringing them to attack us in an unassailable position, where we can deal with them as we will. O happy day, which brings us face to face with the tyrants who have driven us from our homes, who have dishonoured our city, and shed the blood of our nearest and dearest! Only stand fast, and the victory is ours."

By the side of Thrasybulus was a prophet, who was present, according to custom, to declare the will of the gods to the little army. This man had warned his comrades not to quit their ground until one had been slain, adding that he himself was

appointed to perform that sacrifice ; and, as if bent on fulfilling his own prediction, he flung himself on the advancing column, which was now close at hand, and perished. His fall gave the signal for a general attack, and charging down the hill, under cover of a storm of javelins, stones and arrows, the patriots broke the dense ranks of their opponents, and drove them in headlong rout as far as the level ground. The pursuit was not pressed, so that only seventy of the enemy were slain ; but among these was Critias, who thus found an end far better than his deserts, and two other leaders, who had shared the worst crimes of the Thirty.

The usual truce having been granted by the victors for the burial of the dead, those who shortly before had been arrayed against one another in deadly conflict were united in the performance of this sad and solemn duty. They were all Athenians, nourished under the same free institutions, and in many cases connected by still closer ties ; and as they looked into each other's faces, and exchanged friendly greetings, all the horror of this unnatural feud was brought home to their minds. Among the patriots who had fought under Thrasybulus was a certain Cleocritus, who held the high office of herald in the Eleusinian Mysteries. His venerable character, and a voice peculiarly clear and powerful, enabled him to command attention as he addressed this earnest

remonstrance to those who bore arms on the side of the Thirty: "Fellow-citizens, why have you driven us into exile? Why do you wish to slay us? We have never done you any harm; we have taken part with you in many a solemn rite, in many a holy sacrifice; you have been ~~our~~ schoolfellows, our companions in dance and song, our comrades in battle on land and sea. By all these sacred ties, by the common gods of our fatherland, we adjure you to cast off your unholy alliance with those covetous knaves, the common enemies of us all, who, in eight months, have done to death more Athenians than the Peloponnesians in ten years of war. It is they, and they alone, who have set enmity between us, and made us guilty of our country's blood. Doubt not that we have wept for those who have died by our hands to-day, with tears not less heartfelt than yours."

So deep was the effect produced by these moving words that the Thirty found it expedient to draw off their forces, and return in haste to Athens. But it was a sad and anxious company which met in the Senate House on the following day. Division had arisen among the Three Thousand, those who had sinned most deeply being resolved to hold out to the last, while others, who had been more slightly implicated, were for *deposing the Thirty, and setting up a provisional government in their place.* After much dispute,

the more moderate party prevailed; a commission of ten, including two of the Thirty who had shared the views of Theramenes, was appointed to administer the affairs of the city, and the remnant of the tyrants withdrew to Eleusis.

The institution of the Ten was in no sort a democratical revolution, but an attempt to re-organise the oligarchy on a more reasonable basis. As is usually the case with such compromises, the new scheme totally failed in its purpose; distrust and dissension still prevailed among the Three Thousand, and the Ten found it necessary to commit the whole defence of the city to the horsemen, who had to perform double duty, serving as hoplites on the walls during the night, and patrolling the city on horseback by day. It would seem that the Ten tried to win Thrasybulus to their side, by offering him a seat in the new government; but their overtures were rejected with contempt, and hostilities broke out again.

In the irregular fighting which followed, Thrasybulus and his followers had decidedly the advantage, and he was already planning an assault on the city when the cause of the oligarchs was taken up by their old ally, Lysander, who marched to Peiræus with a numerous force, while his brother Libys, who was in command of the fleet, held the harbour in close blockade. It seemed as if all the exertions of

the patriots had been in vain, and the chains of tyranny were to be riveted afresh. But during the previous year a great change of feeling towards Sparta had arisen in the leading cities of Greece. The Spartans had broken all their pledges, and in all the towns which came under their sway after the battle of Ægospotami they had substituted for the mild rule of Athens a system of grinding and bare-faced oppression. This lamentable change had been mainly the work of Lysander; and even in Sparta itself his arrogant and overbearing demeanour had raised up a party against him. He was suspected, not without reason, of a design to overthrow the constitution, and make himself master of Sparta and of all Greece. The party opposed to Lysander was headed by one of the two Spartan kings, Pausanias, and he applied for permission to lead out a second army, hinting that if Athens fell a second time into Lysander's hands he would make that place a centre for his own intrigues. His request was granted, and he presently appeared on the scene with a powerful body of Peloponnesian troops. For the sake of appearances, he made an attack on the position held by Thrasybulus at Peiræus, and was repulsed with some loss. But in a second encounter, choosing his ground more carefully, he inflicted a severe blow on his daring assailant, killing a hundred and fifty of his men. Having thus shown his superiority in the field, he refrained

from pushing his advantage, and exerted himself to reconcile the contending factions at Athens and Peiræus. By his advice representatives were sent by the Democrats at Peiræus, and others from the moderate party in the upper city, to arrange terms of accommodation with the authorities at Sparta. A third embassy was despatched at the same time by the Ten, to plead the cause of the oligarchs, with offers of the most abject submission to the Spartan government. After hearing the envoys of all the three parties, the Ephors and Senate decided to send fifteen commissioners to settle the affairs of Athens in concert with Pausanias. When the commissioners had concluded their deliberations, peace was restored on the following terms :—that the contending factions should lay down their arms, and live together in peace ; that a general amnesty should be proclaimed, excluding only the Thirty, and those who had been immediately concerned in their misdeeds ; and that if anyone did not feel himself safe at Athens he should be allowed to live unmolested at Eleusis. Pausanias then withdrew his army, and left the Athenians to themselves.

Thrasybulus now entered Athens at the head of his troops, and after a solemn sacrifice to Athene in her temple on the Acropolis, he came down to address the assembly, which had been summoned to the Pnyx,<sup>1</sup> by order of the generals. His speech.

<sup>1</sup> The Athenian House of Commons.

was specially addressed to the privileged classes, those wealthy and highborn citizens who, under the sounding titles of *The Good*, *The Noble* and *The Best*, had proved themselves, at every crisis of Athenian history, the worst enemies of the commonwealth. "I advise you," he said, "to examine your high pretensions in the light of recent events. On what do you found your claim to superiority, and assume an exclusive right to rule? Is it on your finer sense of justice? Nay, in this you are manifestly inferior, for the people, in spite of all their poverty, have never wronged you for the sake of your wealth, while you, the richest men in Athens, have waded in crime to add to your store. Are you, then, braver than the commons? The rocks of Phyle, and the hill of Munychia, can tell another tale. But perhaps you are superior in wisdom—you, who, with every advantage on your side—walls, weapons, wealth, powerful allies—were beaten by a handful of homeless and needy men. Or are you puffed up by your friendship with the Spartans? Fine friends, indeed, they have proved, handing you over to us, like a vicious dog, muzzled and chained, to deal with as we please. But fear not that we shall abuse our victory; you shall suffer no harm at our hands, for we are determined to show ourselves as far above you in honour and good faith as in every other manly quality."

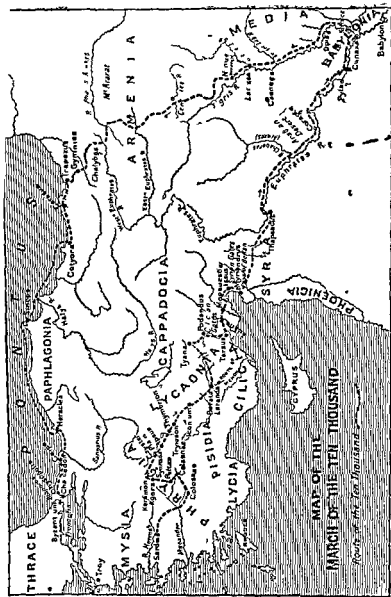
## CHAPTER V

### THE TEN THOUSAND GREEKS

THE expedition of the Ten Thousand under Cyrus, and their yet more famous retreat, form together an episode lying outside the general course of Greek history, but an episode of the highest importance and interest, illustrating in a remarkable manner the immense superiority of Greeks over Asiatics, and serving as a prelude to the gigantic conquests of Alexander. The march of these bold adventurers into the heart of Asia, their easy victory, rendered fruitless by the untimely death of Cyrus, and all that they did and suffered on the weary journey from Cunaxa to Trapezus, are described by Xenophon with great vividness and power in the ablest of his works.<sup>1</sup> We have therefore every reason for giving these incidents a conspicuous place in our gallery of historical pictures.

It may be remembered that, just before the battle of Ægospotami, Cyrus was summoned from his satrapy by a message from his father, Darius, who was then in his last illness. On the death of

<sup>1</sup> The *Anabasis*.



# MAP OF THE MARCH OF THE TEN THOUSAND

Route of the Ten Thousand

that monarch, Artaxerxes, his elder son, succeeded to the throne, and immediately after his accession he received an intimation from Tissaphernes that Cyrus was plotting against him. The young prince was forthwith arrested by order of the king, but his life was spared at the intercession of Parysatis, the queen mother, who prevailed upon Artaxerxes to set him at liberty, and reinstate him in his satrapy.

Cyrus was the favourite son of Parysatis, and he seems to have anticipated that under her influence his brother's claims would be set aside, and he himself named as the successor of Darius. In character and ability he was far superior to Artaxerxes, and he was fired by an ambition to emulate the achievements of his great namesake, the founder of the Persian monarchy. Accordingly, when he found himself disappointed in his hopes of the succession, he conceived the design of seizing the kingship by force, and as soon as he arrived in his satrapy he set about his preparations. His relations with Lysander had brought him much into contact with Greeks, and inspired him with a profound admiration for Greek manners and institutions, and a corresponding contempt for Orientals. His principal aim, therefore, was to raise a sufficient force of Greek mercenaries, and with this object he gave orders to the officers commanding the garrisons in the chief towns of

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his province to enlist as many Peloponnesian soldiers as possible, alleging as a pretext the war in which he was then engaged with Tisaphernes. At the same time he took pains to conciliate the Persian grandees who were sent down to watch his proceedings, and kept up an active correspondence with his friends at the Persian court. He was careful, also, to make regular payment of the tribute due from his satrapy to the royal exchequer, and by these means he contrived, with the active co-operation of Parysatis, to lull the suspicions of Artaxerxes, until his own plans were matured.

His chief agent in the work of recruiting was Clearchus, a Spartan exile, who raised a strong force of Greek mercenaries in the Chersonese, with the ostensible object of defending that district from the incursions of the wild Thracian tribes. A second contingent was held ready in Thessaly, under the command of Aristippus and Menon, members of the powerful dynastic house of the Aleuadae, the hereditary allies of Persia. Further enlistments were made in Bœotia, in Achæa, and among the hardy mountaineers of Arcadia, who were always willing to sell their swords to the highest bidder.

In the beginning of the third year<sup>1</sup> after the death of Darius, Cyrus called in the greater part

of these levies to Sardis, and he soon found himself in command of eight thousand picked warriors, all Greeks, of whom five hundred were light-armed, the rest being hoplites. They were for the most part men of good breeding and education, who had been trained to military habits in the long war between Athens and Sparta, and joined the expedition, partly in the hope of enriching themselves, and partly from love of excitement and adventure. Many of them were exiles, driven from their homes by the oppressions of the Spartan harmosts and of the decarchies set up by Lysander. And it is from this time that we may date the rise of a class of professional soldiers, which had hitherto been almost unknown in Greece. Besides his Greek allies, Cyrus had raised a great army of Asiatics, numbering no less than a hundred thousand men.

Just before the host left Sardis, Xenophon, an Athenian knight, arrived at the Lydian capital, where he was introduced to Cyrus by his friend Proxenus, the leader of the Bœotian contingent, and persuaded to take service as a volunteer. As a member of the wealthy and aristocratic class, which had been implicated in the lawless proceedings of the Thirty, Xenophon, after the fall of the tyrants, may have found his position at Athens unpleasant. It is certain, at anyrate, that he was no friend of the Democracy, and his bold

and active spirit must have chafed under the restraints now imposed by a residence in the weakened and degraded Athens. He was a man of many accomplishments, a soldier, a keen sportsman, and above all a friend and companion of Socrates, trained in the school of that great teacher. It was therefore a most fortunate circumstance which made him an eye-witness of the great events which followed.

About the end of March, Cyrus broke up his camp at Sardis, and advanced by easy stages towards Celænæ, a large and populous city of Phrygia. At the same time a combined Persian and Spartan fleet, commanded by Samius, the Spartan admiral, was directed to proceed in an easterly direction along the coast. On the way Cyrus was joined by several fresh bodies of troops, which had been enlisted under his directions in various parts of Greece; and at Celænæ the muster was completed by the arrival of Clearchus and two other officers, with their levies, which brought up the grand total of Greek soldiers to eleven thousand hoplites, and two thousand light-armed.

The real purpose of the expedition was a strict secret, known only to Cyrus himself and his confidential agent Clearchus. All the rest, both soldiers and officers, had been engaged on the understanding that they were to be employed against the robber tribes of Pisidia, a rugged

mountain district south of Phrygia. Some surprise must therefore have been occasioned when Cyrus, instead of marching due south from Celænæ, turned his back on Pisidia, and, after four days' march in a north-westerly direction, continued his route towards the east. Three days later, during a halt of some duration at one of the Phrygian towns, he was assailed by clamorous demands from the soldiers, whose pay was three months in arrears. The situation threatened to prove serious, for his coffers were empty, and he had nothing to give them but promises. From this embarrassment he was relieved by the arrival of Epyaxa, wife of Syennesis, the native king of Cilicia, bringing with her a large sum of money, which enabled Cyrus to furnish his Greeks with four months' pay.

Four days later the army arrived at Tyriæum, near the eastern frontier of Phrygia. Here Cyrus, at the request of Epyaxa, held a review of his troops. First the Asiatics were passed in array, the cavalry and infantry in their several divisions, while Epyaxa viewed the spectacle from a covered carriage, and Cyrus from his chariot. The Greeks were drawn up separately in their phalanx, four lines deep, with their brazen helmets, purple tunics, greaves, and burnished shields. After driving along the front, accompanied by the queen, Cyrus sent his interpreters, requesting that the whole phalanx might perform a charge. Then the trumpets

hundred Greek mercenaries, who had deserted from Abrocomas; and with these additions the Greek army now reached the formidable aggregate of fourteen thousand men. Before him lay the Syrian Gates, an impregnable pass, which could only be forced by landing troops in the rear of the enemy. But Cyrus was relieved of this necessity by the treason or cowardice of Abrocomas, who retired with all his forces, leaving a second dangerous pass, which led over Mount Amanus, open to the invader.

From Myriandus, a coast town of Phœnicia, the route lay south-eastward, leading towards the Euphrates and on into the heart of Asia. And here occurred an incident which placed the generous character of Cyrus in a strong light, and greatly raised his popularity among the Greek troops. Two officers, Xenias of Arcadia, and Pasion of Megara, being jealous, as it was supposed, of the favour shown by Cyrus to Clearchus, obtained possession of a merchant vessel, and, having embarked their most valuable property, sailed away homeward. Cyrus might easily have captured them by sending one or two triremes in pursuit, but he let them go, and publicly declared his intention of restoring to them their wives and children, whom he held as hostages at Tralles. "They shall see," he said, addressing the assembled soldiers, "that I am fairer in my dealings than they are."

Striking across the heights of Amanus, and through the level country beyond, they arrived, after twelve days' march, at Thapsacus, a large and flourishing town on the Euphrates, commanding the main route from the Syrian coast to Babylon. Then at last the truth came out, and the word was passed from Cyrus to the officers, and from the officers to the men, that it was to Babylon that they were marching, to fight against the Great King. Some signs of mutiny appeared, but the truth had long been suspected, and the Greeks, after extorting from Cyrus the promise of a large donation, to be paid on reaching Babylon, were induced to proceed. The whole army then passed across the river, which was here about half-a-mile broad, and so shallow that no man was wet above the breast.

After nine days' march along the left bank of the Euphrates they entered the desert of Mesopotamia, a wild and waterless tract, stretching in rolling undulations towards the horizon, and destitute of all vegetation, except numerous thickets of wormwood, and other aromatic plants. During this part of the march the horsemen enjoyed excellent sport, riding in pursuit of the wild asses, antelopes and bustards which frequented this desert region. And here, too, they saw with astonishment the gigantic ostrich, flying with incredible speed, which baffled all pursuit.

As they advanced, the country grew more barren and desolate, and many of the beasts of burden perished from want of fodder. For thirteen days they toiled slowly on; and as their supply of meal was exhausted the soldiers were reduced to live on a diet of flesh. In some places their march was impeded by broken ground and deep mud, and the Persian nobles showed their zeal by helping with their own hands to extricate the waggon<sup>s</sup> when they stuck fast. Passing at length out of this difficult country they came to a rich town on the borders of Babylonia, and the soldiers were refreshed by plentiful provisions, and wine made from the date-palm.

They now entered the rich and level plains of Babylonia, and here, for the first time, signs of the enemy began to appear. Tracks were seen in the soil, indicating the neighbourhood of a considerable body of horse; it was the advanced guard of the Persian army, which was falling back slowly before them, burning and ravaging the country as it passed. Yet for three days they continued to advance, without any attempt being made to hinder their progress. Then Cyrus, hearing from deserters that the enemy were close at hand, held a final review of his troops, and made his dispositions for battle, which he believed would have to be fought on the following day. The muster was held at midnight, and when it was ended the

chief officers of the Greek army were summoned to the presence of Cyrus, who raised their spirits by an animated harangue. It was not, he said, from want of men that he had raised a force of Greek auxiliaries, but from a conviction that one Greek soldier was worth many Asiatics. Let them prove themselves worthy of the noble liberty in which they had been bred, a blessing to be prized above all the pomp and pride of Persia. They had nothing to fear from the host of Artaxerxes, which was strong only in numbers and noise; if these were faced with firmness, all resistance would melt away like a cloud, and then all the wealth of that vast empire would be at his disposal, which he would so use as to make his friends the envy of mankind.

At daybreak they continued their advance, expecting every moment to come in sight of the king's forces, which were said to number over a million men; but Artaxerxes had fallen back again, leaving his last line of defence unguarded. This was a vast trench, thirty feet broad, and eighteen feet deep, extending for more than forty miles from the River Euphrates to the Wall of Media, an ancient rampart, now half ruinous, which had been raised by the kings of Babylon to defend their northern frontier. Between the river and the southern extremity of the wall there was a narrow interval of only twenty feet, through which the

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vo armies of Cyrus, Greeks and Orientals, now marched unopposed.

The desertion of so formidable a barrier inspired feeling of contempt both in Cyrus and his followers, who began to think that they would not have to fight at all. Discipline became relaxed, and many of the soldiers placed their weapons on the waggons or beasts of burden, while Cyrus exchanged his horse for the easier conveyance of a chariot. But two days after they had passed the trench, just as they were about to halt for the midday meal, at a place called Cunaxa, a Persian officer of high rank was seen approaching at a headlong gallop, and as soon as he came within hearing he cried out in the Greek and Persian tongues that Artaxerxes was advancing with all his forces in order of battle. There was a brief moment of panic, and then every man hastened to his station: the Greeks, under Clearchus, on the right, flanked by the river, Cyrus, with his body-guard of six hundred horse, in the centre, and the Oriental troops, who were commanded by Arizæus, on the left. A long pause ensued, and the day was beginning to wane, when a vast cloud of white dust appeared on the horizon; it drew nearer and nearer, and gradually its lower skirts, where it met the plain, were darkened by a broad black line. Swiftly it came on, like a black squall moving across the sea, and now the dark mass was lighted

up by the flashing of innumerable shields and spears, until the whole host came into view, and the ground shook beneath the tread of a million feet. The left wing, opposite to the Greeks under Clearchus, was commanded by Tissaphernes, who had travelled by rapid stages up to Persia as soon as he learnt that Cyrus had started from Sardis. This division was composed of Persian cuirassiers, and next to them were the Persian bowmen, with their light wicker shields, which they planted in the ground before them, to serve as a fence, from behind which they discharged their arrows; on the right of the bowmen stood the Egyptian infantry, covered from head to foot by their long wooden shields, while in front, stationed along the whole line, was a row of scythed chariots.

So immense was the royal army that its centre, where Artaxerxes himself was posted with the flower of his cavalry, extended beyond the left of Cyrus; and, observing this, the prince, who was riding along the lines, accompanied by his interpreter and one or two attendants, desired Clearchus to bring round his troops to the left, and strike at the king's centre. But Clearchus neglected to obey the order, fearing to leave his comparatively safe position, where he was flanked by the river; this was a fatal error, which led to the ruin of the whole enterprise.

While Cyrus was still standing between the two

armies, glancing from one to the other, Xenophon, who was serving as a horseman under his friend Proxenus, rode up to him and asked if he had any further directions to give. "Tell the men," answered Cyrus, "that the sacrifices are favourable." At this moment a murmur ran along the Greek lines, and Cyrus inquired what it meant. "They are passing the watchword," replied Xenophon, "*Zeus the Preserver and Victory.*" "I accept the omen," said Cyrus. "Let it be as they say," and with these words he rode off to his own station, in the division of Ariæus.

When the enemy were somewhat less than half-a-mile distant, the Greeks raised their war cry, and began to advance, and some of the more eager spirits pressed forward in advance of the main body. In order to overtake them, those behind broke into a run, and, the movement becoming general, the whole phalanx charged at full speed. The result was that their solid formation was broken, and if they had been encountered with resolution this ill-judged haste might have led to a disaster. But when they were within a bowshot the Persians turned and fled, and the Greeks pressed on in pursuit, calling to one another to keep good order and check their headlong pace. As for the scythed chariots, they were abandoned by their drivers at the first onset, and were now seen coursing wildly in all directions over the plain, threatening destruc-

tion to friend and foe. But, as usual, they were more formidable in appearance than in reality, and they did no harm to the Greeks, who opened their ranks to let them pass. On this side of the field a complete victory had been won, without a single casualty, except one man, who was said to have been wounded by an arrow.

Great was the delight of Cyrus when he saw the rout of the king's forces on his right; and his attendants, dismounting from their horses, bowed down before him, and saluted him as their king. Presently, however, he perceived that his triumph was premature; for Artaxerxes, who as yet knew nothing of the defeat sustained by his left wing, began to bring round his troops, so as to attack his brother's army in flank and rear. Observing his intention, Cyrus made a vigorous charge with his six hundred horse, and speedily put the king's division to flight. In the heat of the pursuit, Cyrus was left almost alone in the field, with a mere handful of followers, called his Table Companions; and at this moment he caught sight of Artaxerxes, whose person had been made visible by the rout of his troops. Instantly, in an ungovernable impulse of rage and hatred, he set spurs to his horse, and shouting "I see the man," rushed upon his brother and wounded him in the breast with a stroke of his javelin. The wound, however, was but slight, and the king's followers came thronging to his aid; so

that after a brief struggle Cyrus was overpowered and slain, and all his comrades perished with him.

As soon as Cyrus had fallen, Artaxerxes ordered his head and right hand to be cut off and paraded through the field. This was a signal to the faithless Ariæus, who, as soon as he caught sight of the dreadful trophy, fled with all his forces to the station which they had occupied on the previous night, leaving the camp of Cyrus to be pillaged by the enemy. The Asiatic quarter of the camp was completely sacked, together with the whole store of provisions left in reserve by Cyrus; but an attack made on the Greek baggage was repulsed with energy, and all the property of the Greeks was preserved intact.

Meanwhile Clearchus and his troops had been carried far away in their pursuit of the flying Persian cavalry. At length they were recalled by the tidings that Artaxerxes had defeated the division opposed to him, and was plundering the camp. Having easily repulsed the king's forces, who tried to intercept them, they reached their camp at about supper-time. But there was no supper for them that night, and few of them had had time to get dinner; so they went fasting and weary to their beds, but their hearts were full of joy and hope, for they had gained an easy victory, and as yet they knew nothing of the death of Cyrus.



The head and hand of Cyrus were paraded through the field  
Patten Wilson

Very different were their feelings when they learnt next morning, from messengers despatched by Ariæus, that their army was now without a head, and that all their labour was in vain. By the advice of Clearchus, a deputation was sent to Ariæus, inviting him to assume the crown of Persia, and promising him loyal support; and in the meantime the famished soldiers obtained a meal by slaughtering some of the beasts of burden, using as fuel the arrows, wicker shields and waggons which had been left by the enemy on the field. Before an answer could be received from Ariæus, the Greeks received a peremptory summons from the king, calling upon them to lay down their arms. The arrogant demand was treated as it deserved, and presently the messengers came back from Ariæus, announcing that he had declined the offer to make him king. The Persian nobles, he said, would not endure him as their ruler, many of them being higher in dignity than himself. It was his intention, he added, to retreat at once towards Ionia, and if the Greeks wished to accompany him they must join him before sunrise next morning.

Wishing to keep his intentions secret, Clearchus, who was now acting as general by tacit consent of the army, returned an ambiguous answer, and then, summoning a meeting of the officers, he informed them that the sacrifices were unfavourable to a renewal of the war. The only course open to

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them therefore, was to accept the offer of Ariæus, for to remain where they were was impossible, as they had no means of obtaining supplies, and, having no guides, they could not retreat by themselves. His advice was accepted, and when darkness came on they left their quarters, and fell back towards the camp of Ariæus which was reached about midnight. Having exchanged oaths of fidelity with Ariæus and his lieutenants, the Greek officers consulted him as to their future course, and he replied that it was his purpose to retreat by a different route, avoiding the desert which had caused them so much trouble on their march to Cunaxa. Accordingly, on the next morning, the two armies continued their march eastward, and arrived by nightfall at some villages in the territory of Babylon, from which they hoped to obtain provisions. During the day, signs had appeared which showed that the king's forces were moving in the neighbourhood, and when they reached the villages they found that the enemy had carried away everything, even to the woodwork of the houses. Here, however, they were compelled to make their cheerless bivouac but their rest was disturbed by a vague alarm which arose in the middle of the night spreading panic and confusion throughout the camp. The tumult was allayed by a shrewd device of Clearchus, who ordered a herald to proclaim that anyone who would give information

against the man who had let loose an ass in the camp should receive a talent of silver as reward. Then the Greeks knew that their fears had been groundless, and quiet was restored.

The advance of the Greeks into Persian territory was construed by the king as an aggressive movement, and so great was the effect produced on his mind that in the morning he sent heralds to request a truce. Clearchus, rightly interpreting the message as a sign of fear, determined to assume a high tone, and bade the heralds to wait outside the camp until he was at leisure. Then he drew up his troops in order of battle, and taking his own station in the van, with a picked company, composed of the finest soldiers in the army, he summoned the heralds into his presence. When they approached, he went forward to meet them with his chosen band, and halting in front of them asked what they wanted. They answered that they had been sent to arrange the terms of an armistice between the Greeks and the king. "Then tell your master," answered Clearchus, "that the Greeks do not talk of truces till they have dined: let him send us dinner, or we will come and take it, with arms in our hands."

With this answer the heralds departed, but returned almost immediately, and announced that the king had sent guides to conduct them to a place where they could find provisions, if they

would first agree to a truce. This was welcome news to the Greeks, who were reduced to sore straits for want of food; but Clearchus still kept up a show of debating the matter, in order to make the Persians believe that he was master of the situation. After some delay the truce was made, and after a difficult march over broken ground, intersected by canals, they were brought by the guides to a group of villages, richly stored with all the produce of that favoured land. After their long fast, the Greeks revelled in luxurious fare—good wheaten bread, dates of enormous size and golden colour, sweatmeats prepared from the seeds and pith of the date-palm, and abundance of palm wine. The sudden change from famine to plenty produced its natural effects, and many of the soldiers were punished for their indulgence in these dainties by surfeit and headache.

After three days spent in these comfortable quarters they received a visit from Tissaphernes, with a suite of Persian nobles, and a great retinue of slaves. Addressing the Greek generals through an interpreter, he stated that he had been sent by the king to ask for what reason they had invaded the Persian territory. Clearchus, speaking for the rest, replied that they had not started from Ionia with any designs against the king, but had been decoyed up the country by Cyrus, until they had gone too far to turn back. Moreover, they were

under heavy obligations to the prince, and thought themselves bound in honour not to desert him in his need. Now, however, their only desire was to get back safely to Greece, and, so long as they were not molested, they pledged themselves to do no harm to the country through which they had to pass. Tissaphernes then retired to convey their answer to the king, and two days after he came back again, and informed the Greeks that he had with great difficulty prevailed on his sovereign lord to spare their lives, though many had protested against such a concession, as unworthy of the royal dignity. Now, therefore, he engaged himself to conduct them back to Ionia, and to provide a market at each stage of the journey in which they could buy provisions. If he failed to do this, they were at liberty to procure supplies for themselves, but they must promise to do this peacefully, abstaining from all violence and pillage. To these conditions the Greeks assented, and pledges of good faith were given on both sides.

A delay of more than three weeks ensued, and during the interval overtures were made by the king to Ariæus, with offers of friendship and favour, and complete forgiveness for all past offences. These negotiations, combined with the prolonged absence of Tissaphernes, excited grave suspicions among the Greeks, who began to think that they were betrayed. They were accordingly

much relieved when the satrap made his appearance with a body of Persian troops, and announced that he was ready to start. Then the march began, Tissaphernes leading the way, with his own troops and those of Ariæus mingled together, and the Greeks following, at an interval of about three miles. After passing the Wall of Media, a vast structure, within a short distance of Babylon, they came to the River Tigris, which was crossed by a bridge of boats.

Pursuing their journey along the eastern bank of the Tigris, in four days they came to the Physcus, a tributary of that river; and at this point they were met by a brother of Artaxerxes, who was leading a large force from Sousa and Ecbatana to join the king's army, and halted to see the Greeks pass. Clearchus caused his men to defile in column, two abreast, and by frequently calling a halt contrived to occupy a long time in the display, thus giving an imposing impression of their numbers. They now entered Media, and came to some villages which were the property of Queen Parysatis, with abundance of cattle, corn and other produce; and Tissaphernes, in his desire to put an insult on the mother of Cyrus, gave up the villages to be plundered by the Greeks.

Nearly three weeks had now elapsed since they had passed the Wall of Media; and during that time there had been constant bickerings, aggravated

by occasional acts of violence, between the Greek soldiers and the Asiatics under Ariæus and Tissaphernes. At the Greater Zab, where they made a halt of some days, the situation became so serious that Clearchus, fearing an open collision, demanded an interview with Tissaphernes, in the hope of coming to a better understanding. Tissaphernes assented, and the Spartan general then addressed to him a long harangue, pointing out that the Greeks had no possible motive for doing him harm, but every reason for wishing him well, since without his aid they had little hope of surmounting the manifold difficulties which lay before them. "We should be madmen," he said, "to turn against you, for without you we should be like men walking in darkness, with every step encompassed by perils. But if we owe our preservation to you, there will be ten thousand stout soldiers devoted to your service, both able and willing to maintain and extend your power, and make you a terror to your enemies."

Tissaphernes replied with a great affectation of candour, professing to be inspired by feelings of the most ardent friendship towards the Greeks, whose good will, he declared, it was the great object of his life to secure. He could not understand, he said, how such idle suspicions could have arisen in their minds; for if he had wished to injure them he had had a hundred opportunities of doing so, without any open breach of the treaty. He concluded by

hinting that he had his own private ambitions, and hoped, with the help of the Greeks, to see them fulfilled.

Clearchus was completely hoodwinked by the professions of the crafty satrap, and it was arranged that on the next day all the Greek generals should attend a conference in the tent of Tissaphernes, to confirm the good understanding, and bring to justice all those who, whether Persians or Greeks, had sown distrust between the two armies. That night Clearchus was sumptuously entertained as the guest of Tissaphernes, and in the morning he went to summon his colleagues from the Grecian camp, which was pitched, according to custom, some three miles from the quarters occupied by the Persians. When his proposal was made known to the army many of the soldiers remonstrated strongly against the rashness of placing all their chief officers in the power of that smooth-tongued and shifty Oriental. But their objections were put aside by Clearchus, and he himself, with four other generals and twenty captains, started on that fatal errand. They were followed by two hundred of the soldiers, who went to purchase supplies in the market attached to the Asiatic camp.

Arrived at the tent of Tissaphernes, the five generals were invited to enter, while the inferior officers remained outside. Then all the treachery of Tissaphernes was made manifest. On an instant



Four of the generals were beheaded"

Patten Wilson

a purple flag was hoisted over the pavilion, and simultaneously Clearchus and his colleagues were seized and pinioned, and Persian soldiers, stationed near for the purpose, fell upon the captains, and cut them down. The generals were conveyed up to the Persian court, where four of them were shortly afterwards beheaded; the fifth, Menon the Thesalian, was kept in captivity for a year, when he died in consequence of the barbarous treatment which he had sustained.

Meanwhile the anxious watchers in the Greek camp became apprised that mischief was on foot, by the sight of Persian horsemen scouring the plain, and slaughtering all the straggling Greeks who came in their way. Presently Nicarchus, one of those who had accompanied the generals, came running up, wounded in a horrible manner, and gasped out the dreadful truth. Thereupon all the Greeks hastened to arm themselves, expecting that an immediate attack would be made on their camp. Nothing, however, of the sort was attempted; but after a while Ariæus came riding up, attended by a small troop of cavalry, and summoned them to lay down their arms. Clearchus, he said, had been put to death for breaking the treaty, while Proxenus and Menon, who had informed against him, were in high honour. The only answer vouchsafed to his lying message was a storm of bitter reproaches; and, perceiving that the Greeks were neither to

be cajoled nor intimidated, he turned and rode away.

Thus relieved from the danger of immediate attack, the Greeks had leisure to review their situation. Small comfort, indeed, had anyone to suggest. They were encamped at the gates of the Great King, who had millions of soldiers, and an inexhaustible treasure, at his command. They were more than a thousand miles<sup>1</sup> from home, surrounded on all sides by hostile nations and cities, without guides, without provisions, betrayed by their Asiatic allies, and robbed of their leaders. Having no cavalry, they could neither follow up a victory nor save themselves from the ruinous consequences of defeat. And with these fearful odds against them they had to face a march of many months, across broad and deep rivers, and over rugged mountains swarming with fierce tribes. Few had the heart to kindle a fire and prepare their evening meal, and the roll-call was but thinly attended. For the most part, they flung themselves on the ground, wherever they happened to be, and thus passed a sleepless night, tortured by the most fearful apprehensions.

It is at this critical moment that we are presented with a full-length portrait of the accomplished Athenian to whom the Greeks owed their salvation, and who has transmitted to posterity the immortal narrative of their adventures. After describing the

<sup>1</sup> In a straight line.

circumstances which had induced him to join the army at Sardis, Xenophon goes on to relate his own experiences on that memorable night. Fear and anxiety long kept him awake, but at length he fell into a brief slumber, and saw a strange dream. It seemed to him that a thunderbolt fell on his father's house, and set it in a blaze. Aroused by the vision, he started up, and began to meditate on the meaning of that message from Jove. A great light had appeared to him, in the midst of trouble and peril—so far the portent was good. But the house was encircled by fire, allowing no egress. Did not this denote that he and all his comrades were caught in the toils, without hope of escape? But soon his manly sense got the better of this doubting mood, and he began to argue with himself thus: "Why do we linger here? The night is passing, and by morning the enemy will be upon us. If we fall into their hands, nothing can save us from ignominy, torture and death. Up, then, Xenophon; shake off this torpor, and rouse the rest to find a way out of this strait."

Having taken this resolution he at once addressed himself to the captains who had served under Proxenus, his ill-fated friend, and urged on them the necessity of taking prompt measures for the defence of the army, and appointing a leader whom all might trust and obey. His proposal was heartily approved, and he himself was invited to take the

command. One only among the captains a Boeotian speaking in his broad Doric expressed dissent, declaring that their only chance was to make submission to the king. "What!" exclaimed Xenophon indignantly. "Do you dare to make such a suggestion to us who have been taught by experience that the Persian is a cowardly tyrant merciless to those who trust him, timid and fawning to those who defy him? Did we not compel him, at the point of the spear, to sue for an armistice, and send us supplies? And are not our generals now exposed to every species of insult and outrage, and longing for death, in reward for the confidence which they placed in his royal word? Away with this fellow," cried the speaker, kindling into a flame of righteous anger, and turning to the other officers. "Strip off the uniform from this unworthy Greek and send him to carry baggage, like a beast of burden." "Nay," answered one of the captains, "he is no Greek at all. Look at his ears pierced for trinkets, like a Lydian slave. So they drove him away."

Then dispersing they went to the different quarters of the camp and called up all the chief officers and captains who had survived. When they were all assembled about a hundred in number Xenophon was requested to state his views once more in the presence of the whole body. He began by an earnest appeal to their sense of responsibility and honour. In a crisis like this, everything depended

on the spirit shown by the leaders which would be faithfully imitated, for good or for evil, by the whole army. Let them show themselves worthy of this great trust, and as they were foremost in privilege, so let them be foremost in wisdom and valour<sup>1</sup>

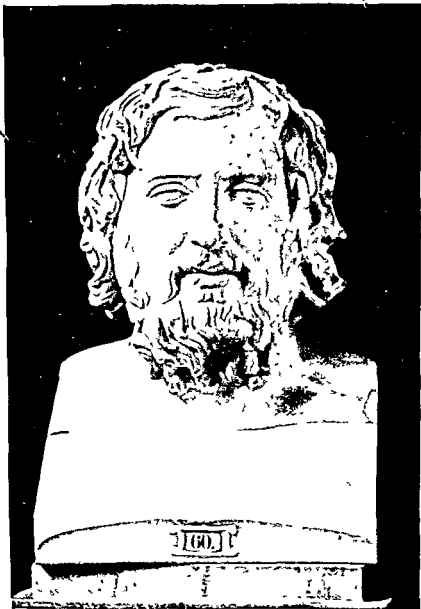
Their first task must be to fill up the places left vacant by Clearchus and his colleagues, and after that a general muster should be held of the whole army, to confirm the election of the new generals, and learn from the lips of their officers what good grounds they had for hope and confidence. Every effort should be made to rouse the men from their present mood of apathy and despair, for until this was done all other measures would be useless.

Then, at the proposal of Chrisophus, the Spartan officer who had joined Cyrus at Issus, the captains retired to make their choice of the new generals, and among those appointed was Xenophon, who took the place of his friend Proxenus. This point having been settled, pickets were posted round the camp, to guard against surprise, and Chrisophus then addressed a few words of encouragement and admonition to the assembled Greeks. Above all, he insisted that they must never think of making terms with the barbarians, but they must hold out to the last, and die, if necessary, like men. Cleanor, one of the new generals, followed in the same vein, and after

<sup>1</sup> Compare the famous words of Sarpedon, *Iliad*, xii 310, *fol*

him Xenophon, who had meanwhile equipped himself in full panoply of war, proceeded to lay down the line of action which it was necessary to pursue. After the warning they had received it would be madness to talk of yielding to a perfidious enemy. "We must carve a way," he said, "through every barrier, with our own good swords, therein lies our only hope of preservation." Hardly had he uttered this last word, so full of augury to a Greek ear, when one of the soldiers sneezed and all who heard it murmured a prayer to Zeus the Preserver, from whom that sign had come.<sup>1</sup> "You hear," resumed Xenophon, the most pious of Greeks, "how Zeus himself bids us hope for a happy issue. Let us vow a thank offering to his guardian power, to be paid in the first friendly territory which we reach. Those of you who approve of this, hold up your hands." The proposal was of course carried unanimously, and when they had chanted the *pæan*, Xenophon continued. Recalling the heroic memories of Marathon, Salamis and Plataea, he exhorted his comrades to show themselves worthy of those grand traditions and of the noble liberty which Greece had enjoyed since those days. "But you *have* shown yourselves worthy," he went on, "for did you not put them to rout at Cunaxa when the odds were ten to one? And if you could fight thus bravely to win a crown

<sup>1</sup> Compare *Homer, Od.* xvii 541



Xenophon  
Photo Berlin Photographic Co

for Cyrus, you must surpass yourselves now, when your own lives, your own honour, are at stake." Xenophon then passed in review the various topics which gave a rational hope of success. If they feared the enemy's cavalry, let them remember that a horseman was inferior in every respect to a foot-soldier, except in the single point of being better able to run away. If they asked who was to guide them through an unknown country, he answered that they would find guides among the natives, who would prove far more trustworthy than Tissaphernes, since their own lives would depend on their fidelity. As for provisions, they could now help themselves without asking, instead of buying every morsel of bread at an exorbitant price. "But how are we to cross the rivers?—We will march towards their source, until we find a ford. And if the worst comes to the worst," continued the speaker, playing his last card, "we can choose some fair site, in the spacious realm of Asia, and found a new home there. This, however, I would recommend only as a last resort; for I fear that in this seductive clime we should sink into ignoble ease and sloth. No, let us rather win our way back to Greece, and tell our countrymen that no Greek need live in want at home, when all the wealth of the East lies at their doors, with none to defend it but timid slaves. And, that we may reach our goal the more speedily, let

us burn all our tents and waggons, and throw away every useless encumbrance which would hinder us on our march. Above all, let every man, whether officer or soldier, remember that strict order and prompt obedience are now more necessary than ever. Then the barbarians will learn, that by murdering Clearchus they have knit ten thousand Greeks together, to act as with one heart and with one head.'

This remarkable speech, at once politic, spirited, and adapted to every aspect of the occasion, had its full effect, and after a formal confirmation of all the measures previously taken by the officers, the soldiers dispersed, in a far more cheerful mood, to make their preparations for an immediate start. While they were getting breakfast, Mithradates, a Persian, and formerly one of the adherents of Cyrus, came up with a few mounted attendants, and called the generals to a parley. His real purpose was to shake the resolution of the Greeks, and tempt them to desert, and when this became apparent the generals publicly proclaimed that they would hold no further communication with the enemy. One of the captains however, Nicarchus, an Arcadian, was induced to betray his trust, and deserted that night with some twenty of his men.

The army was then drawn up in a hollow square, with the baggage animals and camp

followers in the middle, Chirisophus being stationed in the van, two of the elder generals on either flank, and Xenophon, with one of his younger colleagues, holding the post of honour in the rear. After crossing the Zab, they were suddenly attacked, by Mithradates, who hung upon their rear with a mobile force, consisting of two hundred cavalry, and four hundred bowmen and slingers. This species of persecution lasted all day, and in the evening they halted at some villages, having advanced only two miles. The soldiers, many of whom were wounded, were much dispirited; for they had been under fire all day, without power of retaliating, and, if this state of things continued, it seemed likely that they would be cut off to a man. To meet this emergency, the generals, by the advice of Xenophon, organised a force of two hundred Rhodian slingers, who were induced to undertake this dangerous service by additional pay and special privileges; and to these was added a little troop of fifty horsemen, mounted on the best of the baggage-animals.

This innovation, so essential to the safety of the whole army, delayed their march for a day, and on the following morning they made an early start, as they had to pass through a dangerous ravine. They crossed the point without mishap, for, as usual, the Persians had left it undefended; but about a mile farther on Mithradates fell upon them again,

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with two thousand cavalry and four thousand slingers. He expected to make them an easy prey, but in this he was disappointed, for as soon as his troops came within range they were received by a hot fire from the Rhodian slingers, whose missiles, being of lead, carried twice as far as the stone bullets of the Persians. The horsemen likewise played their part well, and, being well supported by the heavy infantry, they and the Rhodians soon put to flight the troops of Mithradates and pursued them through the ravine, slaying many, and capturing eighteen horses.

Continuing their march along the eastern bank of the Tigris, in the course of this and the following day they passed by the ruins of two great cities, called by Xenophon Larissa and Mespilla. The Greeks gazed with astonishment at these monuments of the past—the huge walls of brickwork, raised on a massive substructure of stone, and towering to the height of a hundred to a hundred and fifty feet, and a vast mound, described by Xenophon as a pyramid, under which lay buried the records and the religion of a mighty people. In this scene of desolation had stood, two centuries before, the renowned Nineveh, “an exceeding great city of three days’ journey,”<sup>1</sup> the metropolis of Assyria, built by that fierce warrior race which had once filled Asia with the terror of its power.

<sup>1</sup> Jonah iii 3

Yet so completely had the Assyrians passed out of memory that the very name of their city was forgotten, and more than twenty centuries were to elapse before the veil was lifted by the genius and enterprise of an English scholar,<sup>1</sup> and a new chapter added to the history of the wondrous East.

All this time Tissaphernes had been hovering in the neighbourhood of the Greeks, and on the day after they had passed the ruined cities he came up with a numerous army, and assailed them on both flanks and in the rear with a shower of stones and arrows. His fire was returned with murderous effect by the Greek archers and slingers, every missile finding its mark in the dense masses of the enemy, so that the prudent satrap soon found it expedient to order a retreat. Many of the Persian bows were picked up on the field, and being unusually large and powerful proved very useful to the Cretan bowmen, who knew how to employ them better than their owners.

During the next four days the Greeks marched on through a level country, skirmishing from time to time with the troops of Tissaphernes, who still hung upon their line of retreat. It was now determined by the generals to make a change in the formation of the army, as the broad masses in front and rear led to great confusion and disorder when they were crossing a bridge, or defiling through a pass.

<sup>1</sup> Layard.

In order to obviate this inconvenience, three companies, of a hundred men each, were posted at all the four angles of the square, so that they could fall out of line, as occasion required, and relieve the pressure on the main body in front and rear.

Leaving the plain behind them, they entered a range of hills, which rose gradually to a considerable elevation, crowned at its summit by a castle and village. Contrary to all expectation, the enemy now attacked them with unwonted obstinacy and they were obliged to fight their way from hill to hill, *harassed at every step by the Persian light-armed troops*. So hot was the fire that their own skirmishers were driven in, and compelled to take refuge in the ranks of the hoplites; and it was only by sending a detachment to occupy a hill in the rear of the enemy that they were enabled to reach the village. Here they found a great store of meal, wine and barley, collected for the use of the Persians; and as great numbers of their men were wounded they made a halt of three days. Then, leaving the hills, they resumed their march under great difficulties, for many of the soldiers were employed in carrying their wounded comrades, and others were encumbered by the shields of the bearers. They accordingly took up their quarters at the first village which they reached, and, being now relieved of their burdens, they easily beat off the Persians, who retired towards evening to choose

a position for their camp. It was the prudent practice of Tissaphernes to pass the night at a distance of not less than seven miles from the Greeks; for a great part of his army was composed of cavalry, who required a considerable time to get into their armour, and saddle their horses, so that, if stationed near the enemy, they ran great risk of surprise. Knowing this, the Greek generals resolved to steal a march during the night, and setting out in the evening, they made such good progress that they lost sight of the Persians for three days. But on the fourth day Tissaphernes, who had outstripped them by forced marches, sent part of his troops to occupy the spur of a hill, along the foot of which the Greeks had to pass, while he himself remained in command of the main body, threatening an attack on the rear. At this critical moment Xenophon observed that the position of the enemy on the hill was commanded by another summit, and taking with him some of the light-armed troops, and a picked body of hoplites, he led them at the top of their speed up the steep slope. Seeing his intention, the Persians sent some of their men to anticipate him, and amid the wild shouts of both armies a keen race followed for the possession of the height. Xenophon, who was on horseback, rode up and down among his soldiers, encouraging them to exert themselves to the utmost limit of their powers.

proposal of a Rhodian soldier, who offered to convey the whole army across the river on rafts supported by inflated skins, was declined as impracticable, since the opposite bank was held by a strong force of Persian cavalry. The only alternative, therefore, was to brave the perils of the Carduchian mountains, through which lay the route to the upper course of the Tigris or Euphrates, the rich province of Armenia, and the Black Sea, where they could finish their journey on shipboard. Orders were accordingly issued to prepare for a night march, and starting at the time of the third watch they reached the foot of the mountains by daybreak.

On the first day they marched slowly through a long narrow defile, Chirisophus, with all the light-armed troops, leading the van, and Xenophon bringing up the rear. Darkness came on before the end of the column descended into the first valley, where they found some native villages, deserted by their inhabitants. For the Carduchians fled at their approach to the hill-tops, declining all the friendly overtures of the Greeks, who tried to bring them to a parley. Abundance of food was obtained in the abandoned houses, and every man took what he could find, from sheer necessity, abstaining, however, from all wilful damage. In the night they saw the watch-fires blazing on all the surrounding heights, and heard the wild cries of the natives echoing from hill to hill.

"Now, my lads," he cried, "one more effort, and the road lies open to country, friends and home."  
"It is very well for you, Xenophon," said one of the hoplites, "you have a horse to carry you, but I have to toil on foot, carrying my shield." Thereupon Xenophon sprang from his horse, pushed the grumbler out of the way, and, taking his shield from him, marched stoutly upward, though grievously burdened by his heavy horseman's armour. But the soldiers, seeing their leader's distress, compelled the hoplite by blows and reproaches to resume his shield. Xenophon then remounted, and led the way on horseback until the ascent became so steep that he had to proceed on foot; and his men exerted themselves to such good purpose that they succeeded in gaining the hill-top before the enemy. The road was thus left open for the Greek army, and in the evening they found excellent quarters in a village plentifully stocked with all good things.

The generals now held a council to decide on their future course, and this was a question involved in much difficulty. On the west, the direct route to Ionia was barred by the Tigris, which at this point was so deep that they could find no bottom with their spears; while directly in front of them towered the rugged mountains of the Carduchi, fierce and war-like tribes, who had maintained their independence against all the power of Persia. The

proposal of a Rhodian soldier, who offered to convey the whole army across the river on rafts supported by inflated skins, was declined as impracticable, since the opposite bank was held by a strong force of Persian cavalry. The only alternative, therefore, was to brave the perils of the Carduchian mountains, through which lay the route to the upper course of the Tigris or Euphrates, the rich province of Armenia, and the Black Sea, where they could finish their journey on shipboard. Orders were accordingly issued to prepare for a night march, and starting at the time of the third watch they reached the foot of the mountains by daybreak.

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It was evident from these signs that the Carduchians intended to dispute their passage, and, to ensure despatch, strict orders were issued to leave behind all superfluous baggage, animals, and the numerous captives taken by the soldiers. Thus disencumbered, they entered the narrow pass which led out of the valley, the generals standing by at the neck of the defile, and stopping any man who was trying to steal through with some cherished prize. All that day they pursued their route along the rugged path, harassed by the incessant attacks of the fierce mountaineers, whose numbers increased from hour to hour; and on the next day their provisions gave out, and they were compelled to push on, fasting and weary, in the teeth of a violent storm. Xenophon, who still commanded in the rear, was in severe straits; for the Carduchian bowmen and slingers beset every rock and tree on either side of the way, and discharged their missiles at close range with deadly effect. Their bows were weapons of extraordinary power, which they propped against their left foot, and shot their arrows with such vigour and skill that they pierced through shield, and corselet, and helmet. These arrows were more than three feet long, and some of them were picked up by the Greeks, who fitted them with a thong, and used them as javelins.

Finding himself very hard pressed, and compelled to win every step under a galling fire, Xenophon

several times passed the word to Chirisophus in the van, begging him to halt, and give time for the rear to come up with him. Once or twice Chirisophus did as he was requested, but a third and fourth summons remained unheeded, and Xenophon was left to fight his way as best he could. The retreat of the rear now became a disorderly flight, and as soon as they reached the place where Chirisophus had halted Xenophon sought out his colleague, and reproached him severely for his desertion. "Look at that mountain, and you will see the reason for my haste," answered Chirisophus, pointing to a rocky height, which rose sheer before them, with only one narrow path, beset by a swarm of Carduchians: "I wanted, if possible, to get possession of the pass, for the guides tell me that there is no other way."

Fortunately for the Greeks, Xenophon had brought with him two prisoners, who had been taken during the day's fighting. They were accordingly brought forward and questioned as to the route; and one of them, who, in spite of terrible threats, refused to give any information, was put to death before the eyes of his comrade. The other proved more compliant, and said that he knew another path, practicable even for beasts of burden, adding, however, that it would be necessary to dislodge the enemy from a certain height which overhung the pass.

Acting on this statement, the generals sent round a call for volunteers, and three of the Greeks, all natives of Arcadia, promptly undertook to seize the hill in question, if a sufficient number of men could be induced to serve under their command. Two thousand men were placed at their disposal, and, taking the guide, securely pinioned, with them, they started in the evening on their hazardous errand. A torrent of rain, which came on just at this moment, helped to cover their movements; and as soon as they had departed, Xenophon, in order to divert the attention of the enemy, led a storming party against the main pass, as if with the intention of forcing a way through. As soon as he began to approach the foot of the mountain, the Carduchians rolled down enormous boulders, which broke and thundered along the hillside, until they were shattered into fragments on the rocks below. Xenophon persisted in his feigned attack until he had gained time for the two thousand to get well on their way, and then withdrew his men, who had been fasting all day, to their bivouac. But the slumber of the Greeks was much disturbed by the uproar of that furious cannonade, which was kept up by the enemy all night long.

In the meantime the two thousand stole round the mountain unobserved, and surprising the advanced guard of the Carduchians by their watch-fires drove them from their station on the hill,



'The Carduchians rolled down enormous boulders'

Patten Wilson

where they remained for the rest of that night. At the first appearance of dawn they descended, under cover of a thick mist, towards the main body of the Carduchians, which was holding the lower pass, and as soon as they came in sight of the valley the trumpet sounded, and they charged down upon the enemy. The Carduchians again fled without resistance, and those under Chirisophus, uniting with the two thousand, pressed forward through the defile. Xenophon, however, who was in charge of the rearguard and the baggage, found it necessary to proceed by the longer route, by which the two thousand had marched on the previous night, as the direct road was too steep for the baggage-animals. His passage was fiercely disputed by the Carduchians, and it was only after a severe struggle, in the course of which he had to storm three different hills, that he succeeded in gaining the village where his friends had halted. After their labours, the Greeks passed the night in roomy and comfortable houses well stocked with all kinds of food; and wine was so abundant in this country that it was stored in reservoirs of cement.

Many of the Greeks in the division under Xenophon had been slain, and, in their anxiety to recover the bodies, he and Chirisophus agreed to surrender their guide. Thus left to their own direction, they fought their way on through this

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terrible region harassed at every step by their relentless assailants; and at the end of seven days, from the time when they lost sight of Tissaphernes they came in sight of the River Centrites, which divides the territory of the Carduchi from Armenia.

It was a glad moment for the Greeks, who had

• suffered more in those seven days than in all the rest of their campaign since they marched out of

• Sardis. Here, then, they rested, hoping that the worst was over.

But fresh troubles were awaiting these sorely tried men. For when they awoke in the morning they saw the opposite bank of the river lined with cavalry, and a strong force of infantry posted on the low hills beyond, while the Carduchians were mustering in great numbers on the northern skirts of the mountains threatening an attack on their rear. Every attempt which was made by the hoplites to ford the river proved unavailing, for the water reached up to their necks, and the bottom was covered with great rolling stones, so that if they kept their shields in position they were swept off their feet by the current, while if they raised them above their heads they were exposed to the missiles of the enemy. Here, then, they remained in a state of great despondency, during all that day and the following night.

But the next morning, when Xenophon was at breakfast, two lads came running up to him with

important news. Wandering up the river in search of firewood, they had come to a place where the high rocky banks were inaccessible to the enemy's cavalry, and on trying the depth of the water they found that it barely reached to their waists. Xenophon at once communicated this welcome intelligence to Chirisophus, and the whole army was presently set in motion, Chirisophus leading the van, and Xenophon the rear, with the baggage-train between them. In this order they marched up the river, followed on the opposite bank by the enemy's cavalry, and when they reached the ford Chirisophus placed a wreath on his head, and having stripped off his clothes, and resumed his arms, gave the order to the captains to form their companies in single file. The prophets reported that the sacrifices were favourable, and amid the loud huzzas of the soldiers, and the shrill cries of the women who followed the army, the passage began.

At this moment the ever-active and resourceful Xenophon succeeded in drawing off the enemy's cavalry by a well-timed and skilful manœuvre. Taking with him the most active men from the rearguard, he ran at full speed towards the station which the Greeks had just left, some half-mile down the river, as if he intended to effect a crossing at this point. Deceived by this movement, the hostile cavalry galloped after him to dispute the crossing.

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leaving the way open to Chirisophus, who brought over his division in good order, and then, advancing on the Armenian infantry, drove them from their position on the hills. Seeing that all was going well, Xenophon hastened back with his men to the higher ford, where he found the baggage train just crossing over, and the rearguard in some disorder, as many of the soldiers had left their posts to look after their slaves and other property. This gave the Carduchians the opportunity for which they had been waiting, and raising a wild native chant they advanced to attack the *retreating columns*. The ranks of the Greek rear were rapidly thinning, as the men hurried away to gain the farther shore, and Xenophon had just time to form those who remained into fighting order before the shower of stones and arrows began to rattle on shield and helmet. The Greeks then raised the pæan, and charged their assailants at a run, and easily routed the Carduchians, who, being without defensive armour, were unable to stand the direct thrust of the hoplites' spears. Before they had time to rally, Xenophon drew off his troops and, crossing the river, rejoined the main body.

The Greeks marched steadily forward all day, and it was evening before they reached the first village; for so great was the terror inspired by the Carduchians that a belt of territory, fifteen miles in breadth, was left uninhabited on that side of the

river. Having halted here for the night, they continued their journey for five days, which passed without incident, and entered the western division of Armenia. This province was governed by Tiribazus, a Persian grandee, held in high honour by the king; and on the approach of the Greeks he sent an interpreter to demand a conference with the generals. In the interview which followed it was arranged that the Greeks should have a free passage through that district, with permission to take all needful supplies, so long as they refrained from wanton mischief.

Three days later, while they were encamped near some rich villages, a heavy fall of snow came on in the night, and half buried the sleeping soldiers, who lay without shelter, exposed to the full rigour of an Armenian winter. It was with difficulty that the men could be induced to rise and face the bitter weather, for they lay warm and snug under that snowy blanket. But when Xenophon sprang up, and began to chop wood, clothed only in his tunic, others followed his lead, and having kindled fires they sat down by the blaze, and anointed themselves with lard, oil of sesame and bitter almonds, or turpentine, which they found excellent substitutes for olive oil.

During their stay in this place they had been alarmed by rumours that Tiribazus was moving with an armed force in the neighbourhood; and the

report was now confirmed by a Persian prisoner, who stated that the satrap was preparing to occupy a mountain pass through which the Greeks had to march. By a rapid advance, and a sudden assault they succeeded in clearing the road of this obstacle, and three days later they crossed the River Euphrates, near its source. Four terrible days followed, during which they plodded on through deep snow, in the teeth of a biting north-wind. Many of the slaves and cattle and about thirty of the soldiers were frozen to death and others were seized with a sort of syncope causing them to drop down suddenly and remain motionless and rigid. Xenophon was informed that they could be restored to the use of their limbs by compelling them to swallow a morsel of food, and on learning this he sent some of his men to attend to the sufferers. Many, however, who were stricken with snow blindness, or lamed by frost bite sank down in the snow, unable to proceed, and others, finding a place where the snow was melted by a warm spring huddled round the spot, and declared they could go no farther. To add to their misery, they were dogged all the time by roving bands of the enemy, who threatened every moment to attack them, until Xenophon, with those of his men who were still uninjured, made a resolute stand, and drove off these cowardly assailants. Then promising to send back for his disabled comrades in the morning,

he hurried forward through the darkness, and found the whole line of march strewn with little groups of exhausted men. At last he was compelled to call a halt, and pass the night in the snow, without fire and without food. In the morning, to his intense delight, he was hailed by a relief party despatched from the division of Chirisophus, which had found quarters in a village about two miles distant. The stragglers were then brought in, and the whole army was distributed by lot in the villages, of which there were several in the neighbourhood. A young captain, serving under Xenophon, succeeded in capturing the head-man of the village assigned to his division; and Xenophon took pains to gain his good will, wishing to use his services as a guide. His house, like all the rest, consisted of one spacious, subterranean chamber, entered by a ladder through a hole in the roof, and with a separate entrance, through a tunnel, for the cattle, which were stabled, with their young, in the common dwelling, and foddered on hay. Here were sheep, oxen, goats, poultry, and ample stores of wheat, barley and pulse. And here the Greeks were regaled with a strange liquor, described by Xenophon as "barley wine," which they imbibed through straws out of open vats, full to the brim, and with remnants of the malt floating on the top; and our author assures us that it was a very comfortable

drink, but exceedingly potent, unless mixed with water.<sup>1</sup>

The head-man, whose newly married daughter had also been captured, met Xenophon's advances graciously, and became so friendly that he brought out wine from his own private cellar. All the other houses were furnished with the like abundance, and the soldiers, after all their privations, helped themselves without stint to the good things which lay about them. On the day after their arrival Xenophon made the round of the villages, and in every house which he entered he found a group of revellers, who hailed him with merry shouts, and forced him to partake of their good cheer. The tables were loaded with lamb, kid, pork, veal and poultry, and different kinds of bread; and in the intervals of eating the men toasted one another, stooping down and drinking out of the open vats like cattle.

After a week passed in this joyous fashion the Greeks resumed their journey, under the guidance of the head-man, who was placed in the van with Chirisophus. For three days they marched on, without coming to any inhabited place; and when Chirisophus, who was beginning to grow uneasy, questioned the guide, he declared that there were no villages in this part of the country. Suspecting

<sup>1</sup> The liquor of course was beer, on which the Emperor Julian invoked the curses of Bacchus in a famous epigram



The revellers ha led him with many shouts  
Patten Wilson

treachery, Chirisophus spoke roughly to the man, and beat him; and the head-man, who with great imprudence had been left unbound after this outrage, slipped away in the night. Xenophon was much incensed at this reckless display of ill-temper on the part of his colleague; and he remarks that this was the only incident which disturbed the harmony of their relations during the whole march.

Left to their own direction, they marched for seven days along the upper course of the River Araxes, and two days later they reached the eastern border of the Chalybes, a rude race of mountaineers, famous in antiquity as workers in iron. In front of them was a range of mountains, and the pass which led to the plains beyond was held by the natives, who seemed resolved to dispute their passage. Observing this Chirisophus called a halt, and gave the order to deploy into line. A dispute then arose among the generals as to the proper course to be pursued; one of them was for storming the pass without delay, but Xenophon spoke strongly against this, as a useless sacrifice of life. "We have a clear view," he said, "of the mountains, to the extent of at least seven miles; and, as far as we can see, the only point occupied by the enemy is the pass in front of us. My advice then is that we should wait until nightfall, and then send a detachment to steal round by some other path, and get into the rear of the enemy's position,

while we assist the operation by a feigned attack in front. I am sure," he added, turning with a smile to the Spartan Chirisophus, "that you will approve of this suggestion, for you Spartans are trained to stealing from your earliest years—only, if you are caught in the act, you are punished with stripes, that you may learn to do it cleverly. Now, then, is the time for you to show how well you have been taught, and help us to steal a march without incurring the penalty." "Nay," answered Chirisophus, "I cannot match with you there; you come from a nest of thieves, where all the *best men* are wonderful adepts at stealing the public money, though the penalty, in case of detection, is far more terrible than among us. It is for you to show how well you have been taught."

After this pleasant exchange of raillery Xenophon stated that he had taken prisoners some of the natives, who had been dogging the rear for purposes of plunder, and had learnt from them that the mountains were easy to traverse, even for cattle. It was then agreed that a picked body of hoplites and light-armed men should be sent round to seize the heights in the rear of the enemy, and in the meantime the main army took station in front of the pass, as if intending to force a passage that way. As on a former occasion, the manœuvre was completely successful, and in the morning the natives, finding that their position had been turned,

gave way after some fighting, and left the road open to the Greeks.

Their route now lay in a westerly direction, through the territory of the Taochi. Rumours of their approach had gone before them, and they found the level country deserted by its inhabitants, who had fled with all their live-stock to places of strength among the hills. Just as their supply of provisions was exhausted, they came up to one of the largest of these fortresses, on the top of which was a multitude of these wild people, with their flocks and herds. The only approach was by a steep and narrow path, and every attempt made by the men of Chirisophus to force an entrance was frustrated by a fierce bombardment of rocks. When Xenophon arrived on the spot he found his colleague in great perplexity. "We must take the place," observed the Spartan general, "or we shall be starved; but how we are to take it I don't see." "And what prevents us from taking it?" asked Xenophon, who had not been present at the assault. "There lies the only way up," answered Chirisophus, pointing to the path; "and this is how they serve those who try to scale it"—and he called Xenophon's attention to some of his men, who were being carried past with shattered limbs, explaining that they had been injured by the stones hurled from the summit. "But the ascent is not more than a hundred and fifty feet," said

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Xenophon, measuring the height with his eye  
 "and for two-thirds of the distance we shall be  
 sheltered by those great pine-trees." "Yes; but  
 directly we move the pelting begins," objected the  
 other. "All the better," replied Xenophon, "they  
 will use up their ammunition the sooner."

Chirisophus was fired by his colleague's ardour,  
 and agreed to make another attempt. Seventy  
 men were chosen for the storming party, and one by  
 one they made a rush for the shelter of the trees,  
 each man looking to his own safety, and keeping a  
 watchful eye for the cataract of stones. When they  
 had taken station, each behind his own tree, Calli-  
 machus, an Arcadian captain, stepped out into the  
 open, to draw the fire of the enemy; and, on the  
 instant, down came a whole avalanche of huge  
 boulders, enough to load ten waggons. This man-  
 œuvre he repeated two or three times, and each  
 time the volley was repeated. It happened that  
 three of his messmates, between whom and himself  
 there was much friendly rivalry, were watching his  
 proceedings from the lower edge of the wood; and  
 one of them, jealous of the high honour which Calli-  
 machus seemed about to win, in sigh<sup>t</sup> whole

first. The stronghold was thus carried, and a scene of horror ensued. The women took their children, flung them over the precipice, and then cast themselves down ; and the men followed their example. One of the Arcadian captains, observing a native, in a rich dress, who was about to seek death in the same way, grappled with him, and tried to prevent him ; but the man wrestled with him fiercely, and after a fearful struggle they rolled over the brink and perished together. Very few were taken prisoners, but the Greeks gained a rich booty of oxen, asses and sheep.

For the next seven days they were passing through the land of the Chalybes, whose territory they had skirted a week before. Of all the nations whom the Greeks had encountered on their long march, this was the only one which ventured to face them in the open field. Their defensive armour consisted of a quilted linen corselet, with a skirt of tough plaited fibre defending the loins, greaves, and helmet. They carried no shield, as both hands were required to manage the spear, a gigantic weapon, twenty-two feet in length. At their girdle hung a broad curved falchion, with which they despatched and beheaded those whom they had overthrown in battle, afterwards exhibiting the heads, with wild dance and song, in sight of the enemy. The Chalybes had conveyed all their goods and cattle into the hill forts, so that the

## 192 Stories from Xenophon

Greeks had to subsist on the booty which they had taken after storming the fortress of the Taothi.

For more than three months the Greeks had wandered far from the track of civilisation, over savage mountains, and among hostile tribes. It was therefore a welcome change when, four days after leaving the Chalybes, they came to a large and prosperous city, called Gymnias. The governor of the town received them with kindness, and promised to furnish them with a guide, who would conduct them, he said, in five days within sight of the sea. The direct route was really much shorter, but he wished to use their services in chastising certain hostile tribes with whom he was at war. The Greeks, however, were glad enough to accept his conditions, and, following the guide's directions, they marched through the hostile district, burning and destroying as they went.

On the fifth day Xenophon, who was in his usual place in the rear, actively engaged in repelling the attacks of the infuriated natives, suddenly heard a loud shout proceeding from the top of a mountain which the vanguard had just ascended. At first he thought that the army had been assailed in front, and paid no further attention; but the shout grew louder and louder, being taken up and swelled by every fresh detachment as it gained the summit; so that at last he became alarmed, and, thinking *that something serious was happening, he called*



"Thalatta! Thalatta!"  
Pitten Wilson

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Thalatta! Thalatta!  
Patten Wilson

for his horse, and galloped forward with his little troop of cavalry to lend assistance. As he drew near the sound became articulate, and he heard the cry *Thalatta Thalatta*<sup>1</sup> repeated again and again by a thousand voices. Soon the good news reached the rear, and the whole multitude heavy armed, light armed, baggage train and camp followers, came swarming pell mell up the mountain side until all were assembled on the summit. Then the soldiers fell upon one another's necks with tears and cries of joy, and saluted their officers who had brought them through so many perils to that happy goal.

After raising a great mound of stones and dismissing their guide loaded with gifts, they entered on the last stage of their land journey, and at the end of ten days they arrived at Trapezus a Greek city on the southern shore of the Euxine. The citizens gave them a friendly reception provided them with a market for the purchase of provisions, and allowed them to form a camp in some villages near the town. They took an early opportunity of discharging their vow to Zeus the Preserver, who had encouraged them by a favourable sign in an hour of darkness and despair, and sacrifices were also offered to Hercules the patron and protector of travellers.

The subsequent fortunes of these bold adven

## 194<sup>n</sup> Stories from Xenophon

turers furnish materials for a separate story, which cannot be told here. They had undertaken an enterprise of enormous difficulty, and in carrying it to a successful issue had given a memorable example of what can be achieved by courage, patience and co-operation for a common object. This therefore, is a favourable moment for bringing the present chapter to a conclusion.

## CHAPTER VI

### SOCRATES

THE history of Greek philosophy begins with Thales, who was born at Miletus in about the middle of the seventh century before t. He was the first in a long line of thinkers devoted their lives to the task of finding some explanation of the visible world which d supersede the multitudinous personal cies of the popular mythology. To find the tive substance out of which all things were red—or to establish the ultimate principle n underlies the ebb and flow of phenomena ch was the problem which they set themselves olve; and the answers were various, and rently contradictory. A single word was to the key to the mystery, and serve as a pass- to the innermost shrine of nature. But what that word of power which was to unveil the ary form of matter, or disclose the secret of mperious, universal law? Was it water? Was -? Was it fire? And was the final, determin- condition of existence one of perpetual rest or etual flow?

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All these solutions of the riddle were proposed in turn, and amid all their apparent inconsistency they have this in common, that they were attempts to conceive the universe as a whole and by one bold spring to overleap the barrier which separates the visible from the invisible world. In not a few cases these guesses at truth anticipated in a wonderful way some of the latest theories of modern science, and the broken utterances in which they have been handed down to us glow with a strange prophetic fire which thrills and impresses the reader. Nor can we fail to admire the force and originality of mind which, in an age of childish superstition, enabled these men to conceive and to state most of the problems with which philosophers have since been occupied. But regarded as practical investigators they all fell into the common error of approaching the question at the wrong end, and ages had to elapse before natural science assumed its proper place as a source of enlightenment, and a means of improving the physical condition of man.

So far the attention of philosophers had been almost entirely confined to the study of external nature, and the effort to frame some comprehensive formula which would give the key to all the vast and manifold phenomena in that extensive field. But the development of civic life and the growth of democratic institutions, which mark the beginning

of the fifth century before Christ, gave new matter for speculation, and defined the province in which Greek philosophy was to achieve its greatest triumphs. Henceforth it was man himself who became the chief object of interest, and the investigation of nature gave place to the study of human nature. A new science was thus created, which was gradually broken up into a number of auxiliary sciences — grammar, logic, criticism, ethics and politics.

This important change began with the rise of a remarkable body of men who have earned an evil reputation in history, generally quite undeserved, under the title of the Sophists. They were unfortunate even in their name, for in all the chief languages of Europe the words *sophist*, *sophistical* and *sophistry* convey the notion of an artful, deliberate and dishonest perversion of truth. But the Greek word *sophistes* originally meant simply a clever man, or a man distinguished in some intellectual pursuit, and it is applied to poets, like Homer and Hesiod, to the Seven Wise Men, and to great thinkers, like Pythagoras. It afterwards came to be used specially to denote a class of professional teachers, whose business it was to prepare young men for public life, by training them in the art of speaking, which attained supreme importance in an advanced democracy, like that of Athens. In dealing with the large subjects

the most profligate community, and Plato himself, the great antagonist of the Sophists, would have laughed at the grotesque travesty which has been dressed up for the edification of modern readers.

The task which had been but barely essayed by the Sophists was taken up and worked out by the extraordinary man whose life and teaching form the subject of the present chapter. Socrates had this much in common with the Sophists, that he was exclusively occupied with matters which have a direct bearing on human life and conduct. But he differed from them in two essential particulars: he took no pay for his self-imposed labours, whereas the Sophists exacted large fees from their pupils, and in some cases accumulated great wealth; and he exerted the whole powers of his mind in a profound analysis of those current terms of morality which the Sophists generally accepted as axioms requiring no proof. It was in this arduous pursuit that he was led to the creation of a new scientific method, which was afterwards employed, with fruitful results, in other fields of philosophic research.

The active life of Socrates<sup>1</sup> began when his native city was at the full height of power and splendour, and he lived long enough to witness her decline and fall. Born at Athens just ten years after the battle of Platæa, on reaching

<sup>1</sup> 469-399 B.C.

## 198. Stories from Xenophon

which afford a theme to the orator they were necessarily led to examine certain abstract terms, such as justice, virtue, knowledge and truth; and it was here that they were brought into collision with the philosopher Plato, whose whole life was devoted to a searching scrutiny into the origin and nature of these great principles, which constitute the foundation of man's moral and intellectual life. The loose generalisations of the Sophists, their constant employment of abstract terms, their complete helplessness when challenged to define those terms, their total incapacity for abstract thought, are exposed by Plato with unsparing hand. But in those respects they were neither better nor worse than their contemporaries. They simply represent the average morality of respectable citizens, who shape their lives according to certain accepted rules of conduct, but have never been trained to give a reason for their belief.

Partly through the commanding influence of Plato, and partly in consequence of a confusion between the ancient and modern meanings of the word Sophist, an opinion arose, which is still widely prevalent, that the Sophists were open and avowed teachers of vice, whose corrupt doctrine poisoned the very sources of morality, and hastened the depravation of the national character. There is an intrinsic absurdity in supposing that such a crusade against virtue would be tolerated even in

the most profligate community, and Plato himself, the great antagonist of the Sophists, would have laughed at the grotesque travesty which has been dressed up for the edification of modern readers

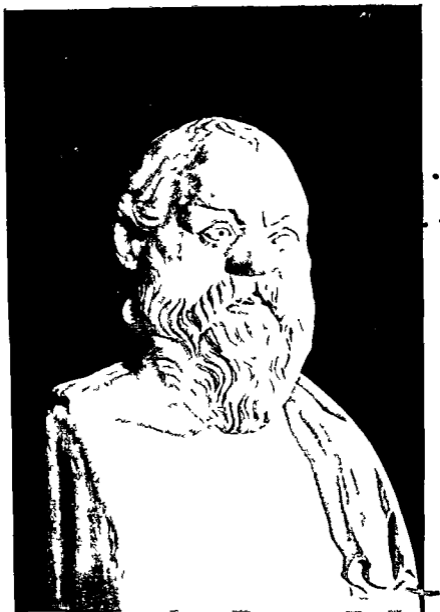
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<sup>1</sup> 469 399 B.C.

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manhood he devoted himself to his father's profession of sculptor, and attained sufficient skill to produce a group of the Charites or Graces, which was seen some five centuries later by the traveller Pausanias, and fragments of which are still preserved. According to some accounts, it was at the instigation of Crito, a wealthy Athenian, that he first devoted himself to the study of philosophy; and, having once made his choice, he remained faithful to that pursuit until the end of his life. At first he applied himself to the subject of physical science, and made acquaintance with all the vague but imposing theories which are associated with the great names of Heraclitus, Anaxagoras, and the other leaders of the Ionic and Eleatic schools. Soon, however, he turned away in perplexity and disappointment from these dark oracles of nature, finding that their grand pretences led to nothing but endless confusion and contradiction. His deeply religious nature became impressed with the conviction that to pry into the mystery of creation is an act of impiety, and a rebellion against the divine will, which has purposely hidden these things from men's eyes. The attitude of Socrates towards physical science and its professors will be no matter of surprise, when we consider how small were the positive results attained by a long line of thinkers, who had dedicated themselves to the contemplation of



Socrates  
Photo Allinari

nature for two hundred years. In mature life he frequently protested against what seemed to him a wanton waste of ability, squandering on idle speculation talents which should have been employed in the service of mankind. "Do these men," he would ask, "think that they are sufficiently informed on human things, and is this the reason why they persist in meddling with the things which belong unto God?"

Leaving others, therefore, to pore over the inscrutable riddle of the universe, Socrates resolved that it should be his task to form the minds of his contemporaries, and teach them to live by the light of reason. Instead of losing himself, like his predecessors, in high cosmic speculations, he turned his eyes earthward, on the busy throngs of the market-place, on the keen strife of the Senate and the law courts, on all the complicated duties and relations which went to make up the public and private life of an Athenian citizen. He entered on a course of moral experiment, searching the hearts of his fellow-citizens, and gradually accumulating materials for the new science of ethics, of which he was to be the founder. No doubt the consciousness of a distinct purpose and mission grew upon him by degrees, and it should be observed that he always repudiated the style and title of a dogmatic teacher. It was not his aim to provide a set of maxims and formulae, or to

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hold up a formal pattern, by which men could shape their lives, as a tailor cuts out a coat. He sought rather to rouse and quicken the latent germ of intelligence, to stimulate inquiry, to root out the weeds of prejudice, and so prepare the soil for the growth of vigorous and independent thought. His method, therefore, was chiefly negative, designed more for the detection of error than for the establishment of fixed rules of conduct. Nevertheless he was profoundly convinced that the same law of harmony, proportion and beauty, the same relation between ends and means, hold sway in the moral life of man as in the fine and mechanical arts. The principle was the same in both cases, but in matters of conduct the application was so much more difficult. He was never tired of insisting on the contrast between the precision, the dexterity and the certainty with which the craftsman and the artist perform their work, and the poverty of the results attained in the supreme art of life. Yet here also there was an end, which all men professed to pursue, the grand prize of happiness, and here too there were means, to which all paid lip service, under the names of virtue, justice, temperance and truth. But when they were called upon to state what they meant by these fine words, their answers were so vague, so fluctuating and so inconsistent that they were shown to be ignorant of the things which belonged

unto their peace How was it possible to carry out the provisions of a law when no one could be found to explain its meaning?

To bring order into this chaos, to compel men to think and judge for themselves, so that they might accept nothing on hearsay, but search out the very roots of their own moral convictions—such was the purpose to which Socrates consecrated his life Early and late he might be seen, in the public walks, in the gymnasia, in the market-place, conversing with all who cared to listen, questioning, examining, disputing Before long his strange personality became known to every man, woman and child in Athens, and his fame spread beyond the limits of Attica so that men came from Thebes, Megara and Corinth to hear him talk Had he been an ordinary man his figure was such as to have made him notorious wherever he lived Among a people like the Greeks, who attached supreme importance to physical beauty, his satyr like face, with thick lips, flat nose and protruding eyes, must have excited on a first acquaintance, astonishment and repulsion But those who were capable of tearing off the hideous mask, and looking into the depths of that marvellous mind stood awed and ashamed, as in the presence of a god Like the song of the Sirens, his voice kept them spell-bound, calling up visions of loveliness, ineffable, divine, until even the most abandoned felt their

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hearts burn within them, and shed bitter tears of anguish, as for some priceless treasure which they had wantonly thrown away.

And this miracle was wrought by the simplest means. For Socrates was no orator, like Pericles, to carry his audience with him and sweep away all opposition by a torrent of eloquence. It was rarely that he could be induced to make a set speech. He proceeded by the method of question and answer, which he used with an air of innocent inquiry, like one who seeks for instruction. This was the famous irony of Socrates—the assumption of ignorance in order to expose the ignorance of others. Let us suppose him to be sitting in one of his familiar haunts, ready to meet all comers in his favourite game of dialectic. Near him stands a group of those who followed him day by day, to glean wisdom from his lips; and round this centre is gathered a ring of idlers, some interested, some indifferent, others derisive. They have been discussing a recent case in the Athenian law courts, in which a father was indicted by his son for murder, and this leads Socrates to propose the question, What is piety? One of the bystanders, who is seen by his dress to be a professional prophet, thinking this to be his own peculiar province, answers off-hand with a ready-made definition. Then the chase begins, and Socrates, like a keen hunter, pursues the rash disputant round the whole circle

of the subject with a quick fire of questions, all bearing on the explanation offered. In vain the victim doubles and equivocates, trying to evade the issue, in vain he takes refuge in declamation, and seeks to involve the subject in a cloud of words, he is brought back to the point by that relentless inquisitor, until at last, fairly run down and beaten, he is compelled to confess that he knows nothing of the matter, or perhaps he loses his temper, pours out a flood of abuse, and goes off in a passion, pursued by the laughter of the crowd. It is very amusing, thinks a young Athenian exquisite, who has just been attending a course of lectures given by a leading Sophist, for which he has paid a heavy fee. He, of course, knows all about piety, and everything else, and Protagoras<sup>1</sup> has taught him a trick which will soon bring this old man to his knees. So he in his turn tries a fall with the intellectual athlete, who grapples him with gentle force and soon sends him away, chap fallen and discomfited.

In dealing with such shallow pretenders Socrates sometimes employed the weapons of banter and ridicule, which led some to suppose that he was a mere clever buffoon, amusing himself at the expense of others. With more serious antagonists he employed the method which we have tried to describe, wrapping them in the irresistible coils—

<sup>1</sup> A famous Sophist.

of his dialectic, until he reduced them to impotence and silence. Intellectually speaking, the result was always the same: the ablest men were mere children in his hands. He was the great physician of the soul, convicting all who came to him of the same disease—the conceit of knowledge, without the reality. To those who desired it he was ready to prescribe the remedy, which was to be found in *frank confession and an earnest desire for amendment*. A few minds, naturally noble, after the first feeling of humiliation, welcomed the wholesome medicine which was to restore them to mental health; but by far the greater number turned away with loathing from that bitter draught, and reviled the great healer by whom it was offered.

But Socrates was no mere theorist—like some modern exponents of morality, preaching asceticism, and giving the lie to his own doctrine by every kind of self-indulgence. Beyond almost all other men he practised what he preached, and his own life was a model of temperance, purity and simplicity. And this complete mastery over his lower nature was not obtained without a severe struggle, for by temperament he was no cold ascetic, armed by insensibility against the allurements of pleasure. In his passionate admiration of beauty, and his keen sense of enjoyment, he was a Greek among the Greeks. But the immense power of his will, and habits of constant self-

discipline, enabled him to subdue the unruly promptings of appetite, and enlist the whole rabble of his emotions in the service of the supreme faculty. He lived contentedly on a pittance barely sufficient to secure him against want, and his dress, diet and domestic economy were such as to excite the derision of vulgar minds. The same threadbare garment served to cover him all the year round, and he went barefooted in summer and winter. A constitution of extraordinary vigour enabled him to persevere in habits of life which would have been impossible to a weaker man. His endurance of cold, hunger and fatigue excited the envy and amazement of his comrades, when he served as a hoplite at the siege of Potidæa.<sup>1</sup> In the rigorous winter of Thrace, when all others remained shivering indoors, or, if they were compelled to go aboard, swathed themselves from head to foot in furs and fleeces, Socrates, though he made no change in his clothing, faced the cold with perfect indifference, and trod the ice with bare feet.

Nor was his courage less conspicuous than his endurance. He saved the life of Alcibiades at the battle of Potidæa; and we have a vivid description of his behaviour after the battle of Delium<sup>2</sup>—how, when the rest of the Athenian army was flying in disorder, he drew back slowly, with a single comrade, stalking the field, “like a

<sup>1</sup> 432 B.C.

<sup>2</sup> 424 B.C.

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pelican<sup>1</sup>, rolling his eyes and showing so resolute a front that not one of the enemy ventured to molest him

It is of the former of these occasions, when he was serving at Potidæa that an incident is recorded which illustrates another peculiarity of this extraordinary man, his habit of concentrated thought and power of abstracting himself from his surroundings. Early one morning he was observed to be standing in an attitude of profound contemplation as if striving to unravel one of those knotty problems which constantly engaged his thoughts. Hours went by, and still he remained rooted to the spot without any change of posture, and by noon the news had spread through the camp that Socrates had been standing immovable as a statue, since daybreak. As may be supposed, much interest was excited among his comrades, and when night came on the time being then summer several of them brought their mats and took turns to watch for the moment when he returned to consciousness. All night long he stood rigid and motionless, but at daybreak he roused himself from his long reverie, offered a prayer to the sun, and walked away. Other cases are mentioned when he was overtaken by the same "weird seizure"<sup>1</sup> and some modern critics have

<sup>1</sup> Tennyson's *Princess*. Something of the same sort is mentioned by Tennyson as happening frequently to himself

supposed that Socrates was subject to a species of cataleptic trance. The conjecture seems probable, for, without some explanation of this sort, such prolonged abstraction almost transcends belief.

In religion Socrates was an orthodox Athenian of the fifth century before Christ, only differing from his contemporaries in his rejection of the grosser legends which we find in the early mythology of Greece. But he frequently spoke of a peculiar influence, of which he had been conscious since the days of his childhood, an inward, warning voice, which made itself heard on all sorts of occasions, small and great, generally in the way of restraint, but sometimes prompting him to a definite course of action.<sup>1</sup> Much discussion has arisen as to the exact nature of this celestial visitant; but it seems probable that Socrates, when he spoke of his "divine portent," was simply alluding, in a fanciful way, to a conscience unusually sensitive and peremptory. He himself always disclaimed any title to special inspiration, and declared that anyone might obtain the same favour, by diligent attention to the duties of religion. But the fact told against him in his trial, lending colour to the charge of worshipping strange gods, not sanctioned by the religion of the state.

<sup>1</sup> This is the account of Xenophon; in Plato the sign is always negative.

Socrates was unhappy in his domestic relations and the name of his wife, Xantippe, has become proverbial for a domestic termagant. She seems, however, to have been a good woman, and her famous husband showed exemplary patience in bearing with her infirmity. Xenophon, in his *Reminiscences of Socrates* describes a scene in which the philosopher gently remonstrates with his son Lamprocles, who had been driven into open revolt by his mother's ungovernable temper. By a series of questions, he probes the mind of the unruly boy, and draws from him the admission that ingratitude is one of the worst of crimes condemned alike by God and man, and that, the greater the benefit received, the blacker is the guilt of him who shows himself ungrateful to his benefactor. And what benefit can be compared to that which is conferred by a mother on her son, who, at fearful risk to herself, has conferred on him the priceless gift of life, a blessing so great that the loss of it is regarded as the worst of evils, and the heaviest penalty which the law can inflict? "And what," continued Socrates, "are all the obligations which you have received from all men besides, when weighed against the debt which you owe to her who tended you, day and night, in the years of your helpless infancy, never pausing to consider whether she would receive any return? Remember how often you have vexed her spirit,

and reflect that what you call her harshness is but the excess of her love."

One more peculiarity must be mentioned, to complete this general sketch of a rich and many-sided nature. The Greeks, it should be observed, were temperate as a nation, and the vice of drunkenness was despised, as proper only for a native of Scythia or Thrace; and Socrates, as we have seen, was the most temperate of the Greeks. But there were certain seasons of festivity when a free indulgence in wine was then regarded in the light of a religious observance. Socrates, whose disposition was eminently social, would sometimes take part in these revels; but no quantity of wine had power to produce the smallest effect on that brain of adamant. On one famous occasion he supped in the house of Agathon, the tragic poet, and "the feast of reason and the flow of soul" was kept up all night, not without a copious measure of more earthly stimulants. One after another the guests succumbed to their exertions "in that celestial colloquy sublime"; and at daybreak Socrates was found discoursing to Agathon and Aristophanes, who were yawning prodigiously, on the essential identity of the genius of tragedy and comedy. Finally he fairly talked the pair to sleep, and having seen to their comfort he left the house, refreshed himself with a bath, and then passed the day as usual in interminable discussions.

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The sense of a mission, to which allusion has been made, was confirmed and intensified, after he had passed middle life, by a message which was brought to him from the national god of Greece. Among his most fervent admirers was a certain Chærephon, a man of fiery and impetuous nature, whose wasted and haggard appearance, the result of his long fastings and vigils, is constantly held up to ridicule by the comic writers. This Chærephon went to the oracle of Delphi and asked whether anyone was wiser than Socrates and the answer was that no man was wiser. When this utterance was reported to Socrates he was greatly perplexed. He was not conscious of possessing any peculiar gift of wisdom, yet his piety forbade him to dispute what the god had declared. After much communing with himself, he resolved to put the oracle to the test, and find out what was the meaning of the statement that no man was wiser than himself. So he went to a leading politician, who had a high reputation for wisdom, and examined him on the subjects which he might be supposed to understand, and the answers which the great man gave showed that all his pretended wisdom was a sham. But perhaps thought Socrates, he is as conscious of his own ignorance as I am of mine, and if he admits this, it will prove, at least, that I am no wiser than he. But when he tried to elicit this

confession he met with a rude rebuff, which convinced him that he was superior to this man in wisdom, as laying no claim to knowledge which he did not possess. Continuing his quest, which he playfully compares to the labours of Hercules, he went to a famous poet, and questioned him on the principles of his art. But the poet turned out to be a worse critic of his own verses than most of his readers, and Socrates was led to the conclusion that poetical genius was a sort of possession, or blind inspiration, like the gift of a prophet or seer. Still he persevered until he had made the round of all the intellectual leaders in Athens, and everywhere he found the same vain pretence of knowledge, which burst like a bubble at the lightest touch.

Then he turned to those who practised the mechanical arts, and here also his experience was substantially the same. They could do something, indeed, which he could not do, and they could do it eminently well. But the skill which they had attained in their own craft led them to believe that they understood the great art of life, and of this they knew nothing.

The meaning of the oracle, then, was, that the height of human wisdom is to know that we know nothing, and that this sad wisdom was possessed by Socrates alone.

Hitherto Socrates had simply followed the

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natural bent of his genius, partly from the delight which properly attends the exercise of any powerful faculty, and partly because he believed that the free employment of his great critical gift was the best way of serving his fellow-men. But after the intimation received by his friend at Delphi he regarded himself as a chosen instrument, appointed by heaven to convict the world of error. And for the last twenty-five years of his life he pursued his task with a clearer vision and a more settled purpose. A group of devoted adherents attached themselves to his person, among whom were Crito, his lifelong friend, the vehement and passionate Apollodorus, Antisthenes, the founder of the Cynic school, Simmias of Thebes, the reputed author of that epitaph on Sophocles which is one of the brightest gems of the Greek anthology, and towards the end, Plato, who afterwards worked out and greatly extended his master's teaching in those marvellous dialogues which are the highest expression ever given to the rapture, the travail and the tragedy of the intellectual life. Others were drawn for a time into the charmed circle by a desire to sharpen their wits for the eager contests of party; and others again approached him from a still baser motive, knowing that they could sell at great price any fragments which they might carry away from that great store of wisdom which the master dispensed to all comers without pay or

reward. For we must not take too literally the interpretation given by Socrates to the words of the oracle, or suppose that all his teaching ended in blank and impotent negation. His words on that famous occasion are best understood if we regard them as an ironical protest against the ignorance and presumption of the world at large. On all those who had any original gift he wrought with a powerful creative impulse, which remains active, even to the present day, in the schools of philosophy. And a few elect spirits, like Plato, found in him a guide, who conducted them to great heights of speculation, from which they could survey the whole empire of thought. Nor did these exalted powers render him indifferent to the common cares and common needs of life. In his conversation with all sorts and conditions of men he had gathered a great fund of practical wisdom. All who were in trouble, all who were in want or difficulty, came to him for counsel and comfort; and they never came in vain.

It may well be believed that Socrates, in the long course of his labours as an intellectual and moral reformer, had raised up against himself a host of enemies. First there was a large group, including many of the most powerful men in Athens, of those whose personal dignity had been affronted by the public exposure of their false pretensions to superior enlightenment. Few men can tamely submit to be

convicted of folly and ignorance; and when the conviction comes out of their own mouths the process is doubly painful. In a community like that of Athens every man had to live in the broad light of publicity, and any ludicrous or offensive trait of character made him the butt of unsparing ridicule. And it was doubtless a bitter morsel for the pompous official, or the reputed leader of thought, to see himself pointed at as the man who had made such a sorry figure in a contest of wits with that incorrigible talker.

But there were other and deeper causes which tended to make the teaching and personality of Socrates offensive to a numerous and influential party in Athens. He was the most notorious representative, on the intellectual side, of that great revolution, affecting every aspect of Athenian life, which began with Themistocles, and gained immense volume and impetus under the administration of Pericles. A generation before, Athens had been a country town, the political centre of a quiet agricultural population, who delighted in the simple, homely ways of rural life, and only visited the capital on rare occasions. But these primitive conditions were now swept away for ever, and had given place to a new order of things, which Themistocles himself could hardly have foreseen in its full extent. The old-fashioned country gentlemen of Attica found themselves out-voted by a vast and

motley multitude, whose interests were almost exclusively commercial; and the old Athens of their fathers' days was transformed into a great imperial state, with extensive foreign relations and far-reaching ambition. Restless minds were beginning to brood over grand schemes of conquest, in Egypt, in Africa, in Italy and in Sicily. In committing their fortunes to the sea, the Athenians had caught something of the fitful and turbulent character which belongs to that unstable element.

Such were the political effects of those tumultuous forces which had been unchained by Pericles, and which he himself could not entirely control. And inwardly, in the hearts and minds of the people, the consequences were not less momentous. A spirit of general curiosity and inquiry was abroad, vague, indeed, as yet, and undefined, but destined, in the course of the following century, to make itself felt in every province of human thought. The Greeks as a nation had grown self-conscious, and were beginning to examine with a critical eye the origins of language, of law, of morality and of religious faith. Now Socrates, as we have seen, was the most eminent exponent of this new tendency to universal criticism, and he had forged a most potent instrument for the detection of error, which is the first step towards the discovery of truth. Fortified by a robust piety, and by a constitution free from the slightest taint of vice and disease, he

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himself might spend his life in perpetual questioning without risk to the integrity of his moral convictions. But for common minds the habit which he exemplified and encouraged was full of danger. The same path which leads some men upward to a clear insight and a reasonable faith, guides others to the opposite conclusion of blank atheism and the abnegation of all principle. But for good or for evil that path has to be trod, by every nation, and by every man, unless he is content to lead the life of a slave. This was what Socrates meant by his famous saying that "a life unexamined is not worth living."

The dangers to which we have referred, as inevitable in the spiritual growth of nations and individuals, were apprehended, more or less distinctly, by what may be called the old conservative party in Athens, consisting of those who clung to the old traditions, and viewed with distrust and suspicion the innovations which, as they believed, were sapping the moral fibre of the people. These men raised the protest, which is to be heard in every age of transition, against the general decay of manners, and the want of piety, of manliness, and of reverence for elders, which they observed in the younger generation. The Athenians, it was complained, had grown so clever that they despised the simple ways of their fathers, and derided that noble discipline which had formed the limbs, and

braced the minds of the young, in the heroic days of Marathon and Salamis. Athens was now filled with a mob of noisy talkers, who wasted in windy and futile disputations the time which should have been devoted to gymnastic and martial exercises. A general licence had succeeded to the grave decorum of ancient manners. Young men squandered their patrimony in riot and debauchery, and even at table children might be seen scrambling for the stimulating food which should have been reserved for their elders.

Echoes of this sentiment are to be found in several of the speeches recorded by Thucydides; but the party of reaction found its most redoubtable champion in the great comic genius Aristophanes. For it was in this age that the Old Comedy, the most tremendous engine of political and personal satire ever known in history, ran through its brief but splendid career at Athens; and Aristophanes lavished all the resources of his art in exalting the old state of things, at the expense of the new. With a reckless disregard for truth he fastens on Socrates, and exhibits him as the arch-heretic, who had done more than all others to pervert the minds and corrupt the morals of his contemporaries. In *The Clouds*<sup>1</sup> Socrates is brought on the stage in the character of a doting old dreamer, who spends his time in star-gazing, and in minute and useless

<sup>1</sup> 423 B.C. Socrates was then in his forty sixth year.

physical experiments. The old charge of atheism, which was commonly associated with such pursuits, is brought up against the philosopher; and by a shameful perversion of fact Socrates is represented as a vendor of corrupt doctrines, taking fees from his pupils, and teaching a sort of wicked sophistry, which will enable them to live a life of riot and wantonness, in defiance of law and principle. It will be seen that every detail in this description was a deliberate and unscrupulous falsehood. Nevertheless it must be observed that behind this huge mass of misrepresentation there was a certain element of truth. Socrates had, in fact, like Pericles, set in motion a force which was to carry men in some cases very far from the goal at which he aimed; and the character of the Athenians as a people had actually declined, and tended downward with a steady descent in the age which followed.

The libels of Aristophanes left a deep and lasting impression on the public mind, and helped to prejudice the jury against Socrates when he was prosecuted for impiety. Another circumstance which contributed largely to the same result was his intimacy with such men as Alcibiades and Critias. The shameless life, and manifold treasons, of Alcibiades, and the aggravated villainy of Critias, were ascribed, most unjustly, to the effects of his teaching. In order to understand the true state of



The School of Athens Socrates discoursing to Alcibiades  
Xenophon, and others

Raphael

Photo Anderson

the case we must examine somewhat more closely his relations with these notorious characters.

Few things in history are more remarkable than the strange intimacy which arose between the bare-footed sage, the embodied idéal of plain living and high thinking, and the "curled son of Clinias," the spoilt darling of Athenian society, the beautiful, the fascinating, the irresistible Alcibiades. Like many others, the wayward youth had felt the attraction of that potent personality, and partly out of caprice, partly from a genuine desire for improvement, he strove hard to win the affection of Socrates, who appealed strongly to his better nature. Socrates recognised the vast possibilities for good or for evil which underlay that frivolous and foppish exterior, and set himself to check the vicious propensities of his youthful admirer, and draw out his better impulses. For some time he was successful; but other influences were at work, counteracting his efforts, and the process of corruption had gone too far to allow any hope of a lasting reform. From his earliest childhood Alcibiades was surrounded by flatterers, who yielded to all his whims, fed his vanity, and fired his ambition, until he fancied himself a born ruler of mankind. His brilliant gifts enabled him to dispense with the steady application and laborious effort which serve as a wholesome discipline to slower natures, teaching them patience and self-command; for he easily surpassed all others

in everything which he undertook, and the triumphs thus cheaply earned encouraged in him the belief that he was the favourite of Nature, placed above the restraints which are ordained for duller men. Socrates alone refused to join in the chorus of admiration to which his ears were accustomed, and remained proof against the charm which no one else could resist. From him the young spendthrift heard nothing but grave admonition and sharp reproof, so that at last he grew impatient of that salutary curb, and, breaking away from his one true friend, resigned himself to the wild excesses which brought ruin on himself and on his country.

According to Xenophon, Alcibiades courted the society of Socrates with the sole object of obtaining some measure of his dialectic skill, to be used as a weapon in public debate. And, though this is a very inadequate statement of the case, the motive was doubtless present, along with the more powerful incentives mentioned by Plato. In the *Reminiscences of Socrates* we have an amusing description of the manner in which the veteran Pericles was worried and flouted by his young relative, then in the freshness of his intimacy with Socrates. The scene may be reproduced here, as it furnishes a good example of the Socratic Method, in its simplest form. One day, just before the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War, when Pericles was absorbed in affairs of the deepest import, he received a visit

from Alcibiades, who broke in on his meditations with the following question:—"Can you tell me, Pericles, what is the meaning of the word law?" "Certainly I can," answered Pericles with dignity. "O please instruct me, then," said the young scapegrace, with an ingenuous air: "I am constantly hearing people praised as law-abiding persons, and I suppose that they could not gain this title without understanding the nature of law." "There is no mystery about the matter," answered Pericles, smiling benevolently. "These are the laws," pointing to some wooden tablets arranged along the wall, "which are ordained by the sovereign people in Parliament assembled, prescribing what must be done, and what left undone." "And we must do what is good, and abstain from what is evil?" "Certainly, that is the sense in which laws are made." "But supposing the government is in the hands of a few powerful men, what name are we to give to the orders which they issue?" "Whatever is ordained by any constituted government is called law." "Even if the government is in the hands of a tyrant?" "Yes, even in that case the principle is the same."

Then, like a practised angler who has fairly hooked his fish, Alcibiades proceeded to play with the venerable statesman. "And now will you tell me," he said, in the same tone of artless inquiry, "what meaning is attached to the terms lawlessness and violence? Are not these words employed when

the stronger imposes his will on the weaker, not by persuasion, but by force?" Here Pericles began to fidget, but he was compelled to admit that the definition was correct. "Then the laws laid down by a tyrant, being carried by violence, are a subversion of law?" "Well, yes," replied Pericles, looking worried, "I retract that part of my definition which applies to the tyrant." But he was not to be let off so easily. "Take the case," pursued his tormentor, "of the few imposing their will on the many, not by persuasion, but by force—is not that an instance of lawlessness?" There was no escape from the conclusion, and Pericles signified his assent by a sullen gesture. Having now got his victim into a corner, Alcibiades delivered the finishing stroke. "The same description holds good," he said, "when the few are coerced by the many, and compelled to obey their behests—this also is not law, but lawlessness and violence?" "I daresay it is," answered Pericles snappishly, "and no doubt you think yourself a mighty clever fellow, I thought the same of myself at your age, when I had more time than I have now for this pretty game of quibbling." "Ah, Pericles!" rejoined the youth with a titter, "how I wish I had known you in your *clever* days."

Thus did this wanton boy baffle and confound a great intellect, by employing the new instrument of logic, which had been forged by his master,

Socrates. It was a fine game for the young wits of Athens, who amused themselves by setting up definitions, and knocking them down again, without caring to arrive at any definite result.

The connection of Critias with Socrates was less close and personal. Like Alcibiades, he wished to learn the secret of that wonderful power which made all men mute and helpless in the presence of Socrates; for if he could master that weapon he would be able to beat down all opposition in the arena of politics. But he was incapable of understanding the moral grandeur of Socrates, and as for any desire of imitating his course of life, which seemed to him supremely wretched, he would rather have died. By his open profligacy he soon incurred the severe censure of the great moralist, who on one occasion put him to shame before a large company by a bitter reflection on his dissolute conduct. The offence was not forgotten, and it was the desire to put an affront upon Socrates which induced Critias, in the days of the Thirty, to issue a decree, forbidding anyone to teach "the art of words." The prohibition was directed against all higher intellectual training, and especially against Socrates, whose open denunciations of the tyranny were no secret to Critias and his associates. Socrates, of course, paid no attention to the order, but persevered in his usual habit of public disputation; and his comments on the enormities of the Thirty

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became more outspoken than before. Those were strange shepherds of the people, he remarked, who spent all their time in reducing the number of the flock. When the remark was reported to the tyrants they summoned Socrates before them, and showed him the law, which forbade him, as they said, to converse with the young. Socrates affected not to understand the meaning of the decree, and asked if he might be allowed to put a few questions.

Receiving permission, he opened fire on these new lawgivers in his accustomed style. Was the "art of words," the practice of which they prohibited, the art of speaking the truth or the art of lying? If it was the former, then plainly it was forbidden to speak the truth—if the latter, surely some means ought to be found of emending the art. On hearing this puzzling dilemma proposed, Charicles, one of the Thirty, flew into a passion, and said in a threatening tone: "If you are so dull, Socrates, we will put the matter more plainly: we forbid you absolutely to converse with young men." "And up to what age," asked Socrates, "is a man to be considered as young?" "Up till thirty," was the reply. "But supposing I want to buy something, may I not ask the price, unless he who offers it for sale has passed the age of thirty?" "Of course you may," answered Charicles; "the prohibition does not extend to cases of that sort. But I see that you are at your old tricks, raising diffi-

culties just for the sake of talking. You know what we mean well enough." "And am I allowed to answer, if anyone asks me the way to the house of Charicles?" "Yes, you are allowed to do that." "But I will tell you what you are *not* allowed to talk about," broke in Critias, who was growing weary of this solemn banter. "give us no more of your *cobblers* and your *carpenters*, and your *blacksmiths*," he said with a fierce sneer, alluding to the philosopher's constant habit of drawing illustrations from the mechanical arts. "I think they must be worn threadbare by your everlasting use of them." "And I must say no more of the themes which these examples illustrate—justice, holiness and the like?" "No, by heaven," exclaimed Critias, "no more of these either and no more of your *shepherds*," he added with a dark look, "*or one day you will be found reducing the number of the flock*." And with this significant threat the audience came to an end.

We have seen how little ground there was for charging on Socrates the bad lives of notorious reprobates like Alcibiades and Critias. Very different was the conclusion to be drawn from the conduct of his true disciples, whose whole career, like that of their master, was a public protest against low aims and vulgar ideals. Their dress, their diet, the constant austerities which they practised, were an offence and a scandal in the

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eyes of "respectable men"—that large and influential class, common in all ages, for whom happiness means fine clothes, rich food, luxurious dwellings and a long train of servants. To persons of this sort the pursuits of Socrates and his followers were a dark riddle, provoking them with a dim sense of something beyond their reach.

Let us observe how Socrates dealt with a representative of this class, the little Sophist, Antiphon,<sup>1</sup> who was jealous of his reputation, and wished to bring his doctrines into discredit. With this intention, he took the opportunity when Socrates was surrounded by his associates, and addressed him in the following manner:—"I always thought, Socrates, that the aim of philosophy was to make men happier; but for you it seems to produce the opposite effect. No slave would remain with a master who treated him as badly as you treat yourself. Your food and drink are of the coarsest, one old coat serves you for summer and winter, and you always go barefoot. And yet, though sunk in misery, you refuse to accept money, which would enable you to purchase the means of a more liberal and gracious mode of life. If, then, the purpose of your teaching is to make your pupils like yourself, it seems to me that you are a teacher of misery."

<sup>1</sup> Not to be confused with his greater namesake, who led the conspiracy of the Four Hundred.

"Plainly, Antiphon," answered Socrates, "you would choose rather to die than to embrace such wretchedness as you ascribe to me. Let us see now in what respect my life is harder than yours. By refusing to take pay I preserve the liberty of conversing with whom and on what subjects I please. Then, as to my diet, do you perceive that it makes me weaker or less healthy than you? Is it more costly, or harder to procure? Do I eat with less appetite, or enjoy my food less than you? And if I can face all weathers in one coat, and without shoes, what should I gain by robing my limbs in rich attire, and wearing shoes of the finest leather? By living hard I have made my body a useful slave, in all things obedient to my will. But those who pamper every appetite live in the basest kind of slavery, the slavery of the mind to the body. All this apparatus of luxury, which you regard as the sum-total of happiness, is but a grievous burden, which impairs our usefulness, as citizens, as soldiers and as men. Therefore I have reduced my wants to the narrowest limit, that as far as possible I may be without let or hindrance in working out the true end of my being, to make myself better, and help others to do the same. For I hold that to want nothing is to be as a god, and that he is most godlike whose wants are the smallest."

But this wisdom was folly to Antiphon, and

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some time afterwards he attacked Socrates in the same strain, mocking the great teacher from whom all might learn, without money and without price. "It is evident," said the scoffer, "that you set no value on your teaching, since you give it away for nothing. Gold is the universal standard of value, by which all things are rated; and why should philosophy be exempted from the general rule?" "My friend," answered Socrates, "there are gifts of the heart, in which it is base to traffic, and gifts of the mind, which no gold can buy. Not vulgar profit, but a common love of truth and goodness, is the tie which unites faithful souls, who walk hand in hand along the path of philosophy, helping one another to become wiser and better. Some take delight in horses, others in fighting-birds, others in hounds; but my delight is in the society of chosen friends, and with them I go in pursuit of knowledge, searching my own heart and theirs day and night, and turning over the treasures stored in ancient books, if perchance we may find something to purify and exalt our lives. And which, think you, is better—to pass our days amid the din of the market-place, or in the cool, still ways of learning and of love?"

This episode exhibits Socrates in his loftiest mood; and we will now relate an incident which illustrates another side of his character, his homely, practical wisdom, and readiness to help his friends

in their distress. At the time of the general exodus from Athens which was caused by the oppression of the Thirty, he observed one of his friends, whose name was Aristarchus, walking slowly along with gloomy and downcast looks. By a few kind words Aristarchus was induced to tell the cause of his trouble. He was one of the small minority who had remained in Athens, and his house was now filled with a helpless crowd of female relatives, abandoned to his care on the flight of their fathers and husbands. There were fourteen of them in all, huddled under one roof without the means of subsistence, for every source of income had been cut off by the rapacity of the tyrants. "We cannot even sell our furniture," continued Aristarchus, "for there is none to buy it; and as to raising a loan, I think it would be easier to pick up money in the streets. It is hard, Socrates, to see my kinswomen dying of want, but I cannot feed so many mouths in these cruel times." "But why should they starve?" asked Socrates, when he had finished his story. "Cannot you follow the example of Ceramon,<sup>1</sup> who has a household as numerous as yours, and not only finds food for them all, but grows rich on their labour?" "But the members of Ceramon's household are slaves," answered Aristarchus. "And does that make them better or worse than those who are

<sup>1</sup> An Athenian, otherwise unknown.

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with you?" asked Socrates. "Worse, I should say," was the reply. "Then if those of the baser sort can live in plenty, is it not disgraceful for free-born women to allow themselves to die of want?"

"But Ceramon's slaves have been bred to a handicraft, whereas these relatives of mine have been brought up as gentlewomen." "I see," said Socrates, smiling, "that you share the common prejudice to be a gentlewoman is to be a useless creature, who does nothing but eat and sleep. I presume that these ladies of yours have learnt to make clothes, and to cook?" "Certainly they have." "Then why should they not practise these arts to obtain an honest living? If idleness is the root of all evil among men, I cannot see why it should be regarded as an honourable state for women. No, my friend, you will find that busy hands make happy hearts. Set these dear ladies to work, and instead of a burden they will become a blessing to you. Want is an evil inmate, which turns the gentle ties of family affection into galling fetters. You have now tasted the miseries of starving gentility, call up the spirit of healthy industry, and love, cheerfulness and peace will once more shed their gracious influence round your hearth."

These brave words put new heart into that troubled, anxious man, and he promised to act upon his wise friend's advice. By raising a loan he was enabled to lay in a supply of wool, which

was spun, woven and turned into clothing by the skilful hands of his kinswomen. His house was filled with the cheerful hum of labour, and bright looks and pleasant words welcomed his entrance when he returned from his errands in the town. Peace and plenty once more reigned in his home, and under the influence of this happy change the ladies began to grow somewhat saucy, twitting him as the only idle member of the family. Meeting Socrates some time after, he laughingly complained of their petulance; and Socrates, never at a loss, bade him tell them the fable of the dog and the sheep. In days of old, when animals had the gift of speech, the sheep came to their master, and said: "It is a strange thing that we, who give you wool, and lambs, and cheese, get nothing in return but what we can pick up from the ground, while this idle dog, who gives you none of these things, is fed from your own table." When the dog heard this he answered: "And quite right too! Do you call it nothing that I watch over you day and night, keeping off wolves and robbers? If it were not for me you would live in perpetual fear, and never have heart to eat a morsel." Then the sheep agreed that the dog rightly held the first place in honour. "And so do you tell your kinswomen," said Socrates, "that you are their natural guardjan, without whose protection they could not live and work secure from harm."

## 234. Stories from Xenophon

From the account which has been given of the career of Socrates the reader will perhaps be able to form a general estimate of his character, as a man, as a citizen and as a philosopher. In later times, when Greek literature was in its dotage, his name was aspersed with abominable calumnies, and these libels, for which there is not a shadow of evidence, have been revived by the busy malignity of some modern critics. If we judge him by the witness of contemporaries, no man ever left a fairer or more stainless record. For more than forty years he had devoted his splendid powers to the service of mankind; and now he was to have his reward. One morning, three years after the restoration of the Democracy,<sup>1</sup> an acquaintance of his, named Euthyphron, found him standing in the porch of the King Archon,<sup>2</sup> perusing a placard. It was the notice of an indictment for impiety, brought against Socrates by a certain Meletus, a poet by profession, ridiculed by Aristophanes for the bad quality of his verses. His portrait, as drawn by Plato, exhibits him as a young man with lank hair, scanty beard and hooked nose.

According to the ironical comment of Socrates, Meletus was led to make his accusation by a high sense of public duty, and zeal for the morals of the

<sup>1</sup> 403 B.C.

<sup>2</sup> An Athenian magistrate to whom indictments for impiety were preferred.

young, which he thought were being perverted by the mischievous teaching of an ignorant pretender. Reading between the lines of this statement, we may conclude that his real motive was the desire to earn a cheap reputation by appearing as accuser against an eminent public character. Two others were associated with him in the accusation, Anytus, a tanner, who had taken a leading part in the expulsion of the Thirty, and Lycon, a professional teacher of rhetoric. Anytus had a personal grudge against Socrates, grounded on what seemed to him an officious interference in his family affairs. For the tanner had a son, whom he was bringing up to his own trade; and Socrates, observing in the lad some sparks of genius, had tried to persuade Anytus to release him from this drudgery that he might devote himself to more liberal pursuits. This was bitterly resented by Anytus, and gave tenfold force to the repugnance which he felt, as a "practical man," towards those high speculations to which the philosopher devoted his life. His sentiment was doubtless shared by many respectable fathers of families whose sons had fallen under the magic spell of Socrates.

As reported by Xenophon, the terms of the indictment was as follows:—"Socrates is charged with neglecting the worship of the gods worshipped at Athens, and introducing new deities; he is further charged with corrupting the young. The penalty

## 236 Stories from Xenophon

is death " But though fully informed of the danger hanging over him, he made no change in his manner of life, and took no trouble to prepare his defence One of his friends, named Hermogenes, noticing that he conversed on all subjects but the one which seemed to concern him most, asked him why he did not study the answer which he would have to make to his accusers

"Have I not been studying it all my life?" replied Socrates "What better defence could I have than to have spent all my days in inquiring what is just, and what is unjust, and in doing right and abstaining from wrong?" "But do you not know," asked Hermogenes, "that the Athenian juries have often been so carried away by an eloquent speech that they have condemned the innocent, and acquitted those whose guilt was notorious?" Socrates, as we shall presently see, had his own opinion on this point, but instead of replying directly to his friend's question he simply stated that, every time he had begun to meditate on his speech, he had been warned by that inward monitor<sup>1</sup> to desist "I see that you are surprised," he continued, perceiving an expression of wonder on his companion's face "But why should you marvel, if it seems good to heaven that I should end my life now? At present no man can boast that he has lived better or more pleasantly than I

<sup>1</sup> See p. 209

For he lives best who strives hardest to improve himself, and he lives most pleasantly who feels that he is outstripping all others in the pursuit of that end. Well, when I compare myself with other men, I feel that I have made more progress than any of them in this kind of excellence; and my opinion is confirmed by my friends, who look up to me as a pattern by which they can mend their own lives. But I cannot hope to enjoy this advantage much longer; in a few years I should have to pay the debt of old age, feeling that I was daily growing worse, and not better, by the dulling of my senses, the weakening of my understanding and the decay of my memory. Or if I were spared that sad consciousness it would be only because I had fallen into blank insensibility. No, my friend, I have lived my life, and if now I perish unjustly the dishonour will light, not on me, but on my judges. I may safely leave my cause to Time's final court of appeal, to the verdict of posterity and the conscience of mankind."

Trials of impiety were generally held before the Senate of the Areopagus, that ancient guardian of law and tradition; but the case of Socrates was tried by a full panel of jurymen, who not only decided the question of guilty or not guilty, but also pronounced sentence after conviction. Both plaintiff and defendant conducted their own case in person, for direct representation by a paid advocate was

contrary to Athenian usage. In the present instance, each of the three plaintiffs spoke in turn. Their speeches have not been preserved, but the general tenor of the proofs alleged may be gathered from the narrative of Xenophon. We may conjecture that Socrates was assailed by Meletus as a religious innovator, by Lycon as an enemy of the democracy, and by Anytus as a social nuisance. The old charge of atheism was brought up against him, and supported by the false assumption that he was devoted to physical speculation. The inward monitor, to which he was constantly alluding, became, in the description of his accuser, a familiar spirit, an unauthorised intruder into the national Pantheon.

In the course of his endless discussions Socrates had let fall some unwary remarks, which were quoted by one of the prosecutors, with the object of raising the impression that he was a seditious person, disloyal to the constitution under which he lived. Thus he had ridiculed the Athenian custom of appointing magistrates by lot, observing that no one would choose a pilot or a carpenter in this way, though the mischief ensuing would be far less. By such remarks, it was asserted, he had taught the young to despise the constituted government, and encouraged them in habits of lawlessness and violence. Again he was constantly repeating with approval the passage in the *Iliad*,<sup>1</sup> describing the

<sup>1</sup> *il.* 188, foll.

conduct of Odysseus when the Greeks were preparing to take flight from Troy.

Whenever he met a noble, a man of mark and name,  
To him he would speak full gently, in accents soft and bland;  
But those of the baser sort he reviled, and smote with his rod."

Clearly, then, said the accuser, Socrates is an advocate of tyranny, for he asserts that the poor and humble may be lawfully maltreated and insulted. And see what has been the effect of his teaching, on such men as Alcibiades and Critias, the worst enemies that Athens ever had!

The speeches of Meletus and Lycon would touch the Athenians in their tenderest points: their religious sensibilities, and their attachment to the Democracy. It remained to bring the case within the sphere of their own hearths and homes, by representing Socrates as an enemy of domestic peace; and this part of the indictment would naturally be left to Anytus, who, as we have seen, had a particular motive for attacking the philosopher on this side. Anytus was a conspicuous politician, who stood high in the esteem of his fellow-citizens; and his great public position would lend weight to his words when he denounced Socrates as a dangerous fellow, who was always putting fine notions into young men's heads, and teaching them to despise their fathers. The grievance, we may believe, was not merely imaginary. Probably

Socrates had many juvenile imitators, whose conversation was not always conducive to the harmony of the family circle, and more than one Athenian parent may have had reason to feel that a youthful convert to philosophy is no very desirable inmate.

By these and similar arguments Anytus and his partners sought to convince the court that Socrates was a false teacher, a heretic, and a traitor, worthy of death. It would not have been difficult for a skilful advocate to prove that the whole case for the prosecution was a malicious slander, appealing to the worst instincts of the Athenian public. But this was not the line taken by Socrates in his famous *Apology*, as preserved for us by his most illustrious disciple.<sup>1</sup> From the first moment when he had received notice of the intended prosecution he had taken his resolve. Filled with a lofty consciousness of his great services to mankind he was determined not to abate one iota of his high pretensions. He had grown old in the endeavour to teach the Athenians how to live and in recompense for that lesson they had dragged him before the bar of justice on a criminal charge. If he could secure an acquittal it was well; he was willing to live, though not afraid to die; but the acquittal must be complete and triumphant and not an act of mercy, extorted by base concessions on his part. If he could gain such a victory over low prejudice, he would indeed

<sup>1</sup> Plato

obtain a crown of glory, worthy even of him. But he had little hope of achieving such a result. To the majority of those present his ways were the ways of folly, and his doctrine mere words and wind. And it was not to be believed that their eyes would be opened at this, the very last hour. Therefore, with full knowledge of the inevitable issue, he stood up before his judges, and told them the story of his life.

The main details of that narrative have already been given, and need not be repeated here. But one or two remarks may be made on the general character of the defence. Socrates insists especially on the words of the oracle, which had first roused in him the consciousness of a definite mission. "You will ask me," he says, "why I cannot live my own life, and leave you in peace to live yours. My answer is that this is my life, and this the duty to which I have been called by the command of heaven. You Athenians are like a generous steed, full of great powers, but dull and sluggish, and I am the gadfly sent to torment you, and sting you out of your lazy ways." This description of a divinely appointed teacher, bound on a mission of moral and intellectual reform, is something unique in the history of Greece; and the ludicrous imagery in which the picture is exhibited was not likely to recommend it to the minds of the judges, who probably regarded this part of the defence as a piece of mockery and mystification.

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Referring to the charge of impiety, Socrates called up Meletus for cross examination, and the wretched poetaster had to submit to the question in the face of that numerous assembly. The result, of course, was a foregone conclusion, it was an encounter between a pigmy and a giant. By a few adroit questions Socrates made it evident that this great champion of orthodoxy, this zealous defender of youthful morals, had never given a thought to the great principles which he invoked. And the victim was not released from that terrible ordeal until he had been proved out of his own mouth to be a liar and impostor. We can imagine the miserable figure which he made as he slunk away into the crowd, with his mean features distorted by rage and shame.

"And this is the man," said Socrates, when he had disposed of his contemptible opponent, "who accuses me of corrupting the young. If the charge is true, these are my proper accusers, indicating by a gesture a group of his acquaintances who were present in the court. "They who have known me for years will be best able to tell you whether they or their young relatives have ever heard from my lips any word tending to base or unworthy conduct. Or if the prosecutors can produce any witnesses to that effect, let them do it now, I will not stand in their way. Socrates paused for a reply, but no one took up the challenge.

As Socrates drew towards the close of his address

his tone grew loftier and more confident, and the judges, who were accustomed to great deference, must have been astonished by the haughty words of a man whose life was in their hands. "I will not stoop," he said, "to plead for my life, though I desire to live, not for my sake, but for yours; for I am your benefactor, and may yet do you much good. Perhaps you expected that I should appeal to your compassion with sobs and tears, or by the moving spectacle of weeping children and friends. Many of you have done the same, when they were pleading their own cause, as they are now hearing mine. But I shall not act in this way, for I hold it unworthy of myself to take my life as a favour when I have done nothing wrong, and unworthy of you that you should give way to weak feeling, and break your solemn oath, which binds you to judge by the law, and not by caprice. If I tempted you to do this, I should indeed be sinning against heaven, and committing the very offence of which I am accused."

Socrates had chosen a strange moment for this bold criticism of a notorious abuse, which must have been felt by many of his hearers to be a deliberate insult. By this last affront, not a few of the judges who had hitherto been favourably disposed were turned against him, and it is surprising to learn that nearly half of their number, which amounted to between five and six hundred, voted

for an acquittal. The verdict of guilty was only carried by a majority of five or six.

According to the rules of judicial procedure in Athens the defendant was allowed, after conviction, to name another penalty, as an alternative to the one proposed by his accusers; and the judges were obliged to make their choice between these two proposals. Socrates, therefore, came forward to comply with this usage, while his friends waited with anxious faces to hear what he would say. "What treatment," he began, "is proper for him who has put aside all hopes of private gain or advancement, and devoted himself, in singleness of heart, to the one purpose of doing you good? He deserves, I should say, to be maintained as a benefactor, at the public expense, for the rest of his life. This is the recompense which I should suggest as due to my merits—for I am the man of whom I spoke. The law, however, compels me to name a counter-penalty. I will not speak of banishment or imprisonment, for these would be worse than death. Shall we say a fine of one mina?<sup>1</sup> I think that the whole of my property might amount to that sum. My friends here offer to raise the amount to thirty minæ: let this, then, be the counter-penalty which I propose."

The manner in which Socrates made his proposal showed that he was resolved to die. And he had

<sup>1</sup> About £4.



his wish. The judges were highly incensed by his claim to be treated as a benefactor, and they condemned him to death. After a few parting words, in which he expressed his satisfaction with the sentence, he was led away to prison, where he was kept in fetters for thirty days. For it happened that the vessel which was despatched every year to Delos, with the sacred envoys who represented the state at the festival of Apollo, had started from Peiræus on the day before his trial; and the interval which elapsed until the vessel's return was a holy season, during which no sentence of execution might be carried into effect. Socrates passed the time in cheerful conversation with his friends, and won the hearts of all who saw him by his gentleness and fortitude. A plan for effecting his escape, by bribing the gaoler, was set on foot by his friend Crito, but Socrates refused to save his life by such means. He would not, he said, break the laws of his country, and pass the few years which remained to him as a homeless exile, wandering from city to city. Athens had rejected him, and now his only place of rest was in the grave.

The last day had been spent, like the others, in philosophic discourse, and the sun was stooping towards the western hills when Socrates called for the fatal cup. At a signal from Crito, the gaoler entered, bringing the draught of hemlock. Socrates took the cup with a cheerful air, and, after a brief prayer, drank

off the contents, and laid him down for his last long sleep. Then the friends who were with him could no longer restrain their sorrow, and the room was filled with the sound of weeping. Socrates looked up with an air of mild surprise, rebuked them gently, and bade them not disturb him in his last hour. After that there was silence, broken after an interval by these strange words, which came faintly from the lips of the dying sage: "Crito, we owe a cock to Æsculapius: take heed that the debt be paid." His meaning was that he had been healed of "that long disease, his life," and owed a thank-offering to the divine physician who had wrought that cure.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE CHOICE OF HERCULES

**A**MONG those who came to Athens to hear the wisdom of Socrates was a young Greek of Cyrene, named Aristippus, who afterwards became the founder of the Cyrenaic school. For him the art of life meant the systematic cultivation of the senses, and the free indulgence in every kind of bodily pleasure : so that he and his master stood at the opposite poles of thought. Aristippus was a citizen of the world, who wished to enjoy all the advantages of civic life without incurring any of its obligations ; and with this intention he wandered from city to city, culling the flower of pleasure wherever he went. Socrates tried to convince him that his plan of life was based on a double delusion. No man, he declared, could avoid the duties of a citizen and at the same time retain his personal liberty. Mankind was divided into two classes : masters and slaves—those who enjoyed, and those who produced, the good things of life : and he who sought to be a master must be prepared to undergo perpetual struggle and effort. Moreover, this pleasure, to whose service Aristippus had

devoted himself, was a foul deceiver, inviting men to a paradise, and leading them to a swamp. Satiety, weariness and disgust—these were the fruits of a life dedicated to the joys of sense. How desperate, then, was the folly of those who de-throned the sovereign faculty of reason, and bowed down to the tyranny of appetite! Not only did they miss that lower kind of happiness at which they aimed, but much worse than this they deliberately renounced those far higher delights which are the reward of a chastened and disciplined nature.

In order to enforce the lesson, Socrates repeated a beautiful allegory, which he had learnt from the famous Sophist, Prodicus. Hercules, so ran the tale, was wandering one day, lost in a daydream such as haunts the tender mind of youth. He had just reached the threshold of manhood, and the time had come for him to put away childish things, and choose his path in life. A strange cry was in his ears, the clamorous prompting of young passion, and now and then, as from some higher, purer region, came the still small voice of his better nature. While thus he pondered torn between conflicting motives his thoughts stood embodied before him in a wondrous vision. He saw two women coming towards him, both tall beyond the common stature but in all else different from each other. For one moved with maiden majesty, clad in a robe of spotless white, and her eyes were as



The Choice of Hercules  
Patten Wilson

the evening star, sweet, yet severe ; on her brow beamed the light of purity, and the spirit of holiness and goodness seemed to wait upon her steps. The other was *rounder and fuller in form*, and Nature had borrowed help from art to enhance the symmetry of her figure and the colour of her face. She was clothed in garments of gauzy texture, and walked with a mincing, affected gait, gazing about her with a wanton stare ; and now she would pause to look at her own shadow, and then again she would glance round, to see if others were observing her.

When they drew near to Hercules, she whom we mentioned first made no change in her stately gait, but her giddy companion ran forward, and addressed the young hero in these terms : " I perceive, Hercules, that thou art debating with thyself what path in life thou shouldst choose. If thou wilt take me as thy guide I will show thee a smooth and easy way, and thou shalt feast on delight, never knowing the taste of hardship, all thy days. There is a garden of bliss, where never comes the sound of war or struggle, a paradise of the senses, where the air breathes softly, perfumed with sweet odours, and vocal with melody. There dwell the ministers of pleasure, who shall wait on thee day and night, spreading thy table with delicious fare, guarding thee from every harsh and unlovely thing, and lulling thee to sleep on a bed of down. Come,

then, with me, and thou shalt never look upon the haggard face of want ; thy hands shall not be soiled with labour, nor thy spirit soured with care ; but what others sow thou shalt reap, denying thyself nothing, but taking freely whatever thy soul desires. For I know how to provide all good gifts for those who are of my company."

"And by what name must I call thee, lady?" asked Hercules, when he had heard her to the end. "My friends call me Happiness," was the reply ; "but those who hate me call me Vice."

Then with a peevish gesture she drew back, for meanwhile the other had approached, and began to address the youth in accents low and sweet. "I also," she said, "have come to thee, Hercules, knowing thy lineage, and having watched the growth of thy spirit from thy childish days. For what I have seen in thee gives me a good hope that if I can win thee to my side thou wilt become a doer of mighty deeds, which shall redound to my honour, and make me more revered of men. I will not deceive thee by chanting the praises of pleasure, but will tell thee the simple truth concerning man's appointed lot, as ordained by heaven. There is nothing good, nothing fair, for men, which can be won without labour and effort. If thou wouldst win the favour of the gods, thou must be constant in sacrifice and prayer ; if thy friends are to love thee, thou must do them

good; if thou desirest to be honoured by thy country, thou must serve her with heart and hand. Go take thy stand on some commanding height, which gives thee a wide prospect over a fair and fruitful land: see the earth laughing with harvest, the grapes purpling towards the vintage, the orchards and olive-trees bowing beneath their load, and the hillsides white with innumerable flocks. Or see the conqueror marching in triumph into his native city, crowned with victory, and enriched with the spoils of the foe—see the athlete speeding foremost to the goal, his mighty limbs gleaming in the sunlight, and his ears filled with the roar of a thousand voices. What was the price paid for this plenty, this glory, or this power? Were they given for nothing, by the free bounty of heaven? No, they are the costly fruit of patient toil and endurance, continued for weeks, and months, and years."

"See, Hercules," said the rival beauty, "how long and how hard is the road which leads to happiness, as she describes it. But I will bring thee thither by a short and easy way."

Then the other, whose name was Virtue, answered with aspect severe: "Thou wretch, what good thing hast thou to boast of? Thy senses are so dulled by sloth and indulgence that thou hast lost the taste of wholesome pleasure, which comes unsought to those who lead a simple

battle and the crash of spears. Every lawful pleasure comes unbidden to those who take me as their guide—sound sleep, keen appetite, and those dear domestic joys which are the crown of a worthy and honourable love. The young take delight in the praises of the old, and the heart of the old is gladdened by the reverence of the young. The past is bright with glad memories, and the present is full of cheerful industry. And so they pass on from youth to age, favoured of the gods, beloved by their friends, and honored by their fatherland; and when the last call summons them to their rest they lie not unregarded and forgotten, but enter into a life without end, in the song of the poet, and in the hearts of all good men."

So Virtue hymned her own praises, and the lesson fell not on unheeding ears, for Hercules chose the long and narrow way, and after a life of ceaseless labour he was caught up into heaven, and became a blessed spirit, an ever-present helper to all in need.

and hardy life. The daintiest fare, prepared with art, and set forth with luxury, can hardly tempt thy jaded appetite, and sleep rarely visits thee on thy silken couch. Thou art like a wanton child, ever in pursuit of bubbles, which still elude thy grasp. Therefore hast thou been cast out of heaven, and art scorned of all good men.\* The fairest of all sounds, the applause of thine own conscience, thou hast never heard, and the loveliest of all sights, the fruit of thine own good deeds, hath never cheered thine eyes. Who would put faith in any word, or give heed to any request, of thine? Or who would choose to join thy band, and take the wages of thy service? Fair, indeed, is the service, and noble the reward! Thou robbest the youth of their manhood, and bringest them, by the ways of wantonness, to poverty and dotage. Woe unto him who listens to thy voice, and suffers himself to be lulled into that sensuous dream! Soon there will come a rude awakening, and he will be left alone, amid the ruins of his life, haunted by the ghost of his murdered self.

"But I am a companion of the gods, and a friend to all men of faithful heart, and without my aid nothing noble or holy is ever wrought, in heaven, or on earth. Wherever I go, love and honour wait upon my presence, in the busy haunts of labour, by the quiet fireside, in the bloodless arena of the Senate and the Forum, in the roar of

battle and the crash of spears. Every lawful pleasure comes unbidden to those who take me as their guide—sound sleep, keen appetite, and those dear domestic joys which are the crown of a worthy and honourable love. The young take delight in the praises of the old, and the heart of the old is gladdened by the reverence of the young. The past is bright with glad memories, and the present is full of cheerful industry. And so they pass on from youth to age, favoured of the gods, beloved by their friends, and honoured by their fatherland; and when the last call summons them to their rest they lie not unregarded and forgotten, but enter into a life without end, in the song of the poet, and in the hearts of all good men."

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## PRONOUNCING LIST OF NAMES

Abrocomas (ābrō'cōmas)  
 Acropolis (ācrō'pōlīs)  
 Adeimantus (ādī māntūs)  
 Ægean (eegee an)  
 Ægospotami (egōspōt'āmī)  
 Agathon (ā'gāthōn)  
 Agesandrides (āgesān'drīdas)  
 Agis (a'gis)  
 Alcibiades (alcībī'ādēs)  
 Aleuadæ (ālu'ādee)  
 Alexicles (alēx'icles)  
 Amanus (āma nūs)  
 Androcles (ān'drōclēs)  
 Antiphon (ān'tifōn)  
 Anytus (ān'yītūs)  
 Archidamus (arkīdā'mūs)  
 Areopagus (ārēō'pāgūs)  
 Arginusæ (arginu'see)  
 Aristophanes (āristōf'ānēs)  
 Artaxerxes (artāk'sēr'k'sēs)  
 Astacus (ās'tācūs)  
 Astyocheus (ast'yōkūs)  
 Callimachus (callī mākhūs)  
 Callistratus (callīstrāt'īdas)  
 Callixenus (callīx'enūs)  
 Callibius (callīb'ītūs)  
 Celæne (kēlee'nee)  
 Centrites (kēntrī'tes)  
 Chalcideus (kāl'kīdūs)  
 Chæreas (kee rēas)  
 Chalcedon (kālse'dōn)

Chalybes (kāl'tēs)  
 Chærephon (kee'rīfōn)  
 Charicles (kā'riclēs)  
 Chios (kī ōs)  
 Chiriosophus (kīrī'sōfūs)  
 Clazomenæ (clādzōm'ēnee)  
 Cleanor (clēā nōr)  
 Cleisthenes (clī'sthēnēs)  
 Cleocratus (clēō'crītūs)  
 Colonus (cōlō'nūs)  
 Critias (crīt'ias)  
 Cyzius (kyd zīcūs)

Darius (dāri ūs)  
 Decelea (dēkēlē a)  
 Delos (dē'los)  
 Delphinium (dēlfi nīm)  
 Diomedon (dīō'mēdōn)

Ecclesia (ēcclē'siā)  
 Ectionæa (cētīōnce'a)  
 Elæus (ēlee'us)  
 Eleusis (ēlu'sīs)  
 Endius (ēn'diūs)  
 Epyaxa (ēp'yax'ā)  
 Eretria (ēre'trīā)  
 Eteoniceus (ētēōnī cus)  
 Eubœa (ūbee'ā)  
 Euryptolemus (ūr'yptōlēmūs)  
 Eurotas (urō'tas)  
 Evagoras (ēvāg ōras)

Gylippus (gylīp'pūs)

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Gymnias (gým'nias)

Hermocrates (hěrmō'crātes)

Hippias (híp'pias)

Hippocrates (híppō'crātēs)

Hyperbolus (hyper'bōlūs)

Laconia (lacō'nīa)

Lamprocles (lam'prōclēs)

Lampsacus (lamp'sācūs)

Leon (lē'ōn)

Lichas (lī'kas)

• Lycon (Lī'kōn)

Lysias (lī'sias)

Meletus (mēlē'rūs)

• Mēvōn-(mēn'ōn)

Methymna (methym'na)

Miletus (mīlē'tūs)

Mindarus (mīn'dārūs)

Mithradates (mithrādā'tēs)

Munychia (mūny'kīa)

Mytilene (mītilē'ne)

Nicarchus (nīcar'kūs)

Oropus (ōrō'pūs)

Paralus (pā'rālūs)

Parysatis (pārīsāt'is)

• Pasion (pā'siōn)

Pausanias (pausān'ias)

Peiræus (pīrē'ūs)

Pericles (pēr'iclēs)

Pharnabazus (farnābād'zūs)

Philocles (fil'ōclēs)

Phrynichus (frī'nīkūs)

Phyle (fī'lē)

Pisander (pīsan'dēr)

Poseidon (pōsī'dōn)

Potidæa (pōtīdēe'a)

Protagoras (prōtāg'ōras)

Proxenus (prōx'enūs)

Prjtanēs (prj tānēs)

Pythagoras (pythāg'ōras)

Rhegium (rē'gīum)

Satyrus (sāt'y'rūs)

Strombichides (strōmbī kīdēs)

• Syennesis (sīēn'nēsīs)

Taochi (tā'ōkī)

Thales (thā'les)

Thapsacus (thāp'sācūs)

Themistocles (thēmīs'tōcles)

Theramenes (therām'ēnes)

• Thrasybulus (thrāsībū'lūs)

Thrasyllus (thrāsīl'lūs)

Timandra (tīman'drā)

Tinbarus (tinbad'zūs)

Tissaphernes (tissāfer'nes)

Tralles (tral'les)

Trapezus (trāpēd'zūs)

Xanthippe (xanthīp'pē)

Xenias (xēn'ias)

Xenophon (xēn'ōphōn)